

# THE LIVING AGE.

SEVENTH SERIES }  
VOLUME LXIX.

No. 3726 December 4, 1915

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VOL. CCLXXXVII.

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PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY BY

THE LIVING AGE COMPANY,

6 BEACON STREET, BOSTON.

## TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION

For SIX DOLLARS, remitted directly to the Publishers, THE LIVING AGE will be punctually forwarded for a year, free of postage, to any part of the United States. To Canada the postage is 50 cents per annum.

Remittances should be made by bank draft or check, or by post-office or express money order if possible. If neither of these can be procured, the money should be sent in a registered letter. All postmasters are obliged to register letters when requested to do so. Drafts, checks, express and money orders should be made payable to the order of THE LIVING AGE Co.

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## GODS OF WAR.

Fate wafts us from the pygmies'  
shore:

We swim beneath the epic skies:  
A Rome and Carthage war once more,  
And wider empires are the prize;  
Where the beaked galleys clashed, lo,  
these

Our iron dragons of the seas!

High o'er the mountains' dizzy steep  
The winged chariots take their flight.  
The steely creatures of the deep  
Cleave the dark waters' ancient night.  
Below, above, in wave, in air  
New worlds for conquest everywhere.

More terrible than spear or sword  
Those stars that burst with fiery  
breath:

More loud the battle cries are poured  
Along a hundred leagues of death.  
So do they fight. How have ye  
warred,

Defeated Armies of the Lord?

This is the Dark Immortal's hour;  
His victory, whoever fail;  
His prophets have not lost their  
power:

Cæsar and Attila prevail.  
These are your legions still, proud  
ghosts,  
These myriad embattled hosts.

How wanes thine empire, Prince of  
Peace!

With the fleet circling of the suns  
The ancient gods their power increase.  
Lo, how Thine own anointed ones  
Do pour upon the warring bands  
The devil's blessings from their hands.

Who dreamed a dream mid outcasts  
born

Could overbrow the pride of kings?  
They pour on Christ the ancient scorn.  
His Dove its gold and silver wings  
Has spread. Perhaps it nests in flame  
In outcasts who abjure His name.

Choose ye your rightful gods, nor pay  
Lip reverence that the heart denies,  
O Nations. Is not Zeus to-day,  
The thunderer from the epic skies,

More than the Prince of Peace? Is  
Thor  
Not nobler for a world at war?

They fit the dreams of power we hold,  
Those gods whose names are with us  
still.

Men in their image made of old  
The high companions of their will.  
Who seek an airy empire's pride,  
Would they pray to the Crucified?

O outcast Christ, it was too soon  
For flags of battle to be furled  
While life was yet at the high noon.  
Come in the twilight of the world:  
Its kings may greet Thee without scorn  
And crown Thee then without a thorn.

A. E.

The Times.

## NOT WITH VAIN TEARS.

Not with vain tears, when we're be-  
yond the sun,

We'll beat on the substantial doors,  
nor tread

Those dusty high-roads of the aim-  
less dead

Plaintive for Earth; but rather turn  
and run

Down some close-covered by-way of the  
air,

Some low sweet alley between wind  
and wind,

Stoop under faint gleams, thread the  
shadows, find

Some whispering ghost-forgotten nook,  
and there

Spend in pure converse our eternal  
day;

Think each in each, immediately  
wise;

Learn all we lacked before; hear,  
know, and say

What this tumultuous body now de-  
nies;

And feel, who have laid our groping  
hands away;

And see, no longer blinded by our  
eyes.

Rupert Brooke.

**REVOLUTIONARY ROLE OF AIRCRAFT IN WAR.**

It would be very rash for any one to attempt to predict what war will be in the future, but it does not require much discernment to foresee that the mastery of the air, now indisputably acquired by man, must entail profound modifications in military and naval armaments, and consequently in the strategy and tactics of commanders, as well as in the composition of their armies. The inestimable services rendered in the present war by the aerial forces of the belligerents have already surpassed all the hopes and expectations of those who, believing in the future of the dirigible and the aeroplane, were instrumental in obtaining the creation of the Fifth Arm. Since they are known to all, it is unnecessary to relate the performances of either the lighter or heavier than air vessels, or to insist on the deceptions experienced by the partisans of the former, and the realization of the wildest dreams of those who believed in the vast superiority of the latter. The fact that both of them have made their presence felt in the remarkable manner known to the whole world, suffices to demonstrate that in future warfare they will assert their existence to an extent not yet fully recognized even by the Chiefs of the War Office and Admiralty of any nation.

It is permissible to make that assertion, because in Great Britain, as in France and even in Germany, the great majority of the heads of those departments and of the commanders of the land and naval forces were, at the beginning of the war in August 1914, very sceptical of the aeroplane being capable of effecting anything more than short scouting and exploring expeditions in calm weather. The aeroplane was therefore regarded by

most generals as an encumbrance rather than a useful auxiliary. It is true the German people had founded exaggerated hopes on the power of their Zeppelins to intervene efficaciously in battle, and to spread terror and demoralization in their enemy's ranks; but if the leaders of their armies were not already conscious that the vulnerability and other defects of their dirigibles, such as they existed at that time, deprived them of all military value, they were quickly taught the lesson. In any case, it is certain it was not on them they relied to secure, as they believed they would, a prompt and crushing victory. It was with their artillery, and the impetuous rush of their infantry and cavalry, they expected to overwhelm those they had traitorously attacked.

At the commencement of hostilities the Germans were probably, almost as far as the English and French, from realizing the immense importance of aeroplanes as instruments of war, but they had nevertheless furnished their armies with a greater number of those auxiliaries than were in the hands of the French and British forces. They had even armed many of them with bombs and mitrailleuses. No doubt a glimmer of the truth concerning the paramount importance of aerial instruments of war had penetrated their minds, and the appearance of so many aerial foes over the French and British armies in the first months of the war opened the eyes of the Allies to the necessity of surpassing the enemy, both in the number of avions and in their fighting capacities. Fortunately that was effected with greater promptitude than might have been expected.

All the inventors of aeroplanes seem to have understood the utility of the flying-machine as an instrument of

war. Ader, who in 1897 was the first man to leave the earth on a machine heavier than air, has described in a remarkable book on the subject all the services he believed avions could render in war. The brothers Wilbur and Orville Wright were so thoroughly convinced that the army possessing a powerful aerial force could score an easy victory over an adversary unprovided with such an auxiliary, that they had no sooner constructed their first aeroplane in secret, than, after offering their invention to their own Government in America, they hastened to Europe in the hope of being able to sell the monopoly of flight to Germany. For what reason the negotiations for the sale of their patents failed has not been made public, but it is important to note they took place while Santos Dumont, Henry Farman, Delagrè, and Bleriot were vying with one another in France, in the summer of 1907, to capture the £2000 prize offered by MM. Henry Deutsch de la Meurthe and Archdeacon, to the man who should first prove the practical value of the aeroplane by flying out, veering completely round, and returning to his starting-point. When in the following summer Wilbur Wright came to France to make his first public experiments of flight, he insisted strongly on the value of his flying-machine as an instrument of war, and he was careful, by the intermediary of his financial supporter, M. Lazare Weiller, to invite the French military authorities to witness his performances. Yet it was not till after the first great aviation meeting held at Bétheny (Rheims) in August 1909 that the French Government ordered a few monoplanes and biplanes as experimental machines. Their success surpassed all expectations as scouting avions. From that moment the development of military aviation in France advanced with giant strides. Never-

theless two more years elapsed before it was discovered that the aeroplane could render invaluable service by rectifying the aim of gunners firing at objects hidden from their sight. The Fifth Arm was created, but on the outbreak of war the chiefs of the Aeronautic Department at the War Ministry had not foreseen the employment of the aeroplane for any other purpose than scouting and rectifying the fire of artillery. Of the 600 or 700 avions possessed by the French army, perhaps a dozen were armed with mitrailleuses for self-defence, but there was no question of using the machines for bombardment.

The profound modifications which the existence of the Fifth Arm must entail in war can be understood when it is remembered that the comparatively insignificant aerial forces possessed by the belligerents to-day have demonstrated the aeroplane is not only the indispensable auxiliary of all the other four arms, but that it is capable of performing most of the services rendered by them. It may be said, avions have already superseded cavalry for scouting, which they can effect infinitely quicker than horsemen, and with comparatively little risk. They can, moreover, carry their exploration far to the rear of the enemy's fighting lines. Though they cannot construct bridges, dig trenches, raise fortifications, &c., they can wreck bridges, railway lines, roads, &c., even in places far in the rear of the enemy, which the Engineering Corps could not possibly reach. Avions have not yet been constructed to carry very heavy loads of projectiles equal to those fired from the formidable guns now being used by the belligerents, but they can bombard all places situated within a radius of 200 or 250 miles, which is an infinitely longer range than that of any cannon it is possible to imagine. The crews of aeroplanes cannot engage in hand-



to-hand fighting, but they can participate in the battle of infantry by preceding the charge with a storm of darts and bombs dropped on the enemy, and by pursuing him in retreat with the same weapons, thus once more substituting themselves for cavalry.

These now undeniable results, which when foreshadowed long ago in "Blackwood's Magazine" were met with incredulity, open up a vast vista of possibilities, especially as the existing aeroplanes will most surely be superseded by vastly improved aerial craft of various descriptions, each well adapted for the particular work it will be called on to perform. The avions in the hands of the Allies at the beginning of the war were designed solely for scouting and exploration. A certain number of them have been transformed into bombarding machines, and quite recently a few double-engined aeroplanes, capable of carrying a fairly heavy load of explosives, have been sent to the front. But their number is insignificant. Unless the present hostilities are prolonged much beyond the general prevision, it will evidently be impossible to construct the immense aerial fleets, and especially to train the necessary number of pilots and assistants, to enable the Fifth Arm to assume the rôle of paramount importance it is destined to play in the future.

It may be that, though the aeroplane can perform most of the services rendered by all the four traditional Arms, its existence will not entail the suppression of a single one of them. Nevertheless there seems good reason for believing that the great battles of the future, on which the destinies of nations will depend, will be fought by mighty aerial fleets, and that the land forces of the victors will complete the conquest by the prompt occupation of the enemy's country, of which the army will be at their mercy, especially

because the victorious aerial fleet will surely be able to aid most materially in constraining it to surrender.

The military avions of to-day, each carrying many hundred pounds of powerful explosives, can penetrate 200 or 250 miles over a hostile country and return to their base of operations. It may be taken for granted the scope of their action will be vastly increased in a near future, and that the bombarding aeroplanes will transport a much more formidable load of bombs. Those heavily laden machines will be escorted and protected by fighting avions against the attack of the enemy that will inevitably seek to oppose their progress. To imagine, or rather to foresee, the paramount importance aerial vessels of all sorts will assume in the future, it is only necessary to realize the fact that every first-class Power will be able to build and man, not hundreds, but, if necessary, hundreds of thousands of aeroplanes. And the State which may thus obtain the mastery of the air will be able to impose its authority, for good or ill, on the other nations of the world. An insular position, like that of Great Britain, could not save the land from invasion by the aerial forces of a Continental Power. To insure their safety, the islanders must not depend on the sea to protect them, or on their navy. The only means of opposing such an invasion would be a superior aerial fleet.

It is, of course, impossible to foresee with certainty the composition of the future aerial fleets, but the commanders will be on board, and direct the manœuvres, as Admirals do at sea. The aerial vessels will naturally be of various descriptions, and it is not improbable that lighter than air-ships, each carrying either tons of explosives, or perhaps a hundred or more men, to be landed if and when required, will be amongst the number. In any case, there will certainly be giant aeroplanes

capable of rendering similar services. The collision between two formidable aerial fleets will be terrible, but perhaps less sanguinary than a great battle on land. Hundreds, and probably thousands, of aerial craft will be wrecked. Many will inevitably crash to the earth, entailing the annihilation of their occupants; but, most surely, a far greater number, being only crippled, will be brought to the ground without complete disaster, the soldiers manning them being, however, naturally made prisoners of war in the case of their falling within the enemy's lines.

The Allies have in the present war sought, with apparently signal success, to respect the rights of non-combatants even in their aerial raids. On the other hand, the Germans do not pretend to disguise the fact that the majority of their aerial expeditions have been undertaken with the premeditated intention of violating the code of warfare they signed at The Hague. They have sent their Zeppelins across the North Sea and English Channel on purpose to terrorize the non-combatant population by dropping explosive and incendiary bombs on them and their dwellings. Those acts were uselessly and barbarously cruel, perhaps especially because the means the unscrupulous foe had at his disposal to accomplish them were too small to have any chance of effecting the desired result of inspiring such terror as to induce the civil population to clamor for peace at any price. But the moment will come, and it is probably less distant than the general public imagine, when all the Powers of Europe will possess in their aerial fleets the means of putting the courage of the non-combatant populations of the enemy's country to a serious test. It is not only possible to imagine, but reasonable to foresee, that a foe may be inspired with the same contemptible

sentiments as those of which the Germans now boast, and will be able to despatch a fleet of thousands of aerial vessels on a mission of devastation, which it may, by surprise, succeed in accomplishing, at least in part, before it can be opposed by the aerial defenders of the country, since it will be possible to make the start from almost anywhere, and to select the most unexpected destination.

Even if the aerial belligerents were always sincerely desirous to avoid endangering the lives of non-combatants, it would often be materially impossible to do so. The approach of land forces can be foreseen in sufficient time to enable the population to withdraw, and the bombardment of towns should be preceded by notice to the remaining inhabitants to seek shelter in their cellars or elsewhere. But attacks from the air will come suddenly and unexpectedly, in all parts of the country. Places at a distance of hundreds of miles from what is now called "the Front" will be just as exposed as those in the immediate vicinity of the enemy's land forces.

One of the main objects an aerial fleet will have in view will naturally be the destruction of establishments in which the enemy manufactures his war materials: ammunition, cannons, bombs, aeroplanes, motors, &c. They will of course be protected, as far as possible, by defensive works on land and by strong aerial forces. Battles in the air in their neighborhood will be inevitable, even if they are situated in the heart of the country. The victory of the invading fleet over the defending aerial forces, and the consequent success of its attempt to wreck many or several of the war material manufactories, would seriously cripple the enemy's fighting power. Of course all the persons employed in such military establishments will be aware they run the risks of war just as much as

if they were serving in the ranks of the army. It is not unlikely that in certain cases it will, if necessary, be possible to effect a landing from the aerial fleet to complete the work of destruction.

Moreover, the invasion of a country by the air will be a possibility of which serious account will have to be taken in future wars. Given a sufficient number of aerial vessels and pilots, there is no reason why a descent should not be made on a most unexpected and undefended spot. Already the landing chassis of heavier than aircraft have been so much improved that those flying-machines can descend on and rise off very rough and unprepared ground, and the aeroplane constructors will certainly succeed ere long in reducing the space still required for the starting and alighting of their flying apparatuses. It may be argued that a little army landed from an aerial fleet will soon exhaust its ammunition and supplies, which is an undeniable probability. But the powerful bombs carried on the great bombarding machines, lighter or heavier than air, will be used to protect the forces landed till supplies of ammunition can be brought to them, or at least till they can re-embark on their aerial vessels. The damage it will be possible to do in this manner, and the moral effect such aerial raids are calculated to produce, will be considerable, even if the landing has to be followed by re-embarkation. It is, however, quite possible to foresee that the extermination of the little invading army, or its retreat, will not be inevitable. The landing-place may be so chosen as to render it impossible to send promptly a considerable army against it, and the aerial forces, which it may be supposed will always be quickly despatched to the spot, may be overpowered by the invading aerial fleet. In that case reinforcements and

supplies of ammunition, &c., may be received, and a permanent footing in the country obtained. No one will pretend that the execution of such a feat of war will be easy. On the contrary, it must be most difficult, especially when the place of landing is far distant from the frontier or coast, and to dream of undertaking it the invader must possess, or imagine he possesses, undeniable superiority in the air.

The possibility of aerial craft facilitating invasion by sea appears undeniable. It may be that at the present moment the bombs carried on aeroplanes are not sufficient to sink or seriously disable big vessels of war, but they are already powerful enough to wreck smaller war-craft, such as torpedo-boats, &c., and it will certainly not be long before aeroplanes will be built to transport projectiles equal to those fired from naval guns. The destruction of vessels of war by the aerial artillery will therefore depend on the aim of the bomb-droppers. Already, before the present war, the Germans made experiments of bomb-dropping from dirigibles in the mouth of the Elbe. They alleged they proved that from the height of about 100 metres (328 feet), a projectile could be dropped with almost complete certainty on a target measuring 1 square metre (10½ square feet), and that consequently it could be dropped into the funnel of a war-vessel, entailing its destruction. There is no reason to doubt the correctness of that assertion, but the dirigible which might attempt to achieve the exploit would have but a very poor chance of surviving the fire which would be directed against it while seeking to place itself at such a low altitude over its prey. Nevertheless the means of dropping projectiles from great altitudes with precision from vessels lighter and heavier than air are being sought in all coun-

tries, and it may be taken for granted they will be invented. Even supposing the aim be not so accurate as that attained with land and naval artillery, the fact that it will be possible to assail vessels on the sea with a veritable storm of powerful bombs, dropped from altitudes placing the aggressors beyond the range of gun-fire from the ships, is of paramount importance. It shows that the Power, possessing supremacy in the air will, in no distant future, be able to clear the sea, and thus facilitate the landing of an invading army. Since the only efficacious weapon which can be used against an aerial vessel is another aerial vessel, every nation, careful of its safety and independence, will in the future develop its aerial forces of all descriptions with as much, if not greater, energy as in the past it augmented its land forces or navy.

People may be inclined to inquire why some, if not all, the achievements indicated above as certain to be accomplished in the future are not undertaken without further delay in the present war. There are many good reasons for not attempting them at the present moment. Among them is that none of the belligerent Powers possesses a sufficient number of avions to constitute a really formidable aerial fleet. And, admitting that the machines and their motors could be constructed within a few months, which is not the case, it would be a much more difficult task to train the necessary number of pilots, bomb-droppers, aerial gunners, &c., to say nothing of all the mechanics required on land. Then, there is the great question of the organization of the aerial forces. An aerial fleet must have a commander, or what may be called a "Flight Admiral," on board one of the aerial vessels. He must be able to transmit his orders to the pilots of the various craft under his command.

Already during the present hostilities, aerial raids have been made with considerable success by little squadrons of avions. Those expeditions have certainly had a leader, but each of the pilots received his instructions before starting, and carried them out to the best of his ability. Such general orders will be quite insufficient when real battles in the air have to be fought. Victory will be secured, not by numerical strength alone, but by the tactics of the commander and his skill in utilizing, at the proper moment, the various fractions of his aerial forces, which must be composed of avions of essentially different types. At the present moment, all the aeroplanes which can be built and properly manned are required by the belligerents as auxiliaries to their armies numbering millions of men. They are needed everywhere, for scouting, to rectify the fire of artillery, to hamper the concentration of hostile troops by blowing up bridges, destroying railway junctions, damaging roads, &c.; to wreck ammunition and provision stores, to protect the land forces and cities and towns against the attack of hostile avions; and also to lend their aid in battle by dropping bombs and darts on the enemy, thus checking charges and converting checks into helter-skelter retreats. It is seldom twenty, thirty, or forty avions can be spared to make a raid over the enemy's country, and the damage that such a small aerial force can do, even if it be directed against a place of vital importance to the enemy, is not often sufficient to materially hamper the operations of his land forces or to create serious panic. It may be that if the war is prolonged another year or more, a really formidable aerial fleet, independent of the auxiliary aerial forces indispensable to the army, will be organized by one or more of the belligerent States, and it is certain

the Power which may first accomplish that feat will thus acquire a very serious advantage over its adversaries.

Blackwood's Magazine.

T. F. Farman.

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## VIGNETTES FROM THE ITALIAN FRONT.

ON THE EVE OF BATTLE.—“LA MESSA  
DEL SOLDATO.”

*Brescia, August 15th, 1915.*

In the old winter cathedral of Brescia we watched the “Messa del Soldato,” a service at which no civilian was allowed to assist, and to which we were only admitted by invitation in our capacity of war correspondents.

The Duomo where the soldiers' Mass was celebrated is a beautiful old Lombard building dating from the twelfth century. We had to descend two flights of steps to reach it, as it is built below the level on which the town of Brescia stands to-day. The Duomo Vecchio, as it is called, is of circular shape, it has beneath big arches a gallery running all around it, from which one can look down on the floor of the church where the congregation was assembled. The Duomo is built entirely of bare gray stones, not an ornament nor a picture breaks the impressiveness of the great simple lines. No more fitting setting could have been found for this solemn and poignantly suggestive ceremony.

It was indeed an unforgettable sight! I was taken aback when I first realized that in all that great building, filled as it was to overflowing, there were only men, and those men, soldiers. Hundreds of gray-green clad men stood there; row upon row, ranging in age from early youth to mature manhood, most of them men of these northern provinces—wiry, earnest-looking, fair-haired and gray-eyed; a mass of soft-toned, greenish color, broken only by the dazzling whiteness of the linen *cornettes*, the headdress of two

Sisters of Charity, rising up like twin Lenten lilies from a carpet of moss, bringing by the gentle purity of their presence an ideal and feminine note to that warlike and virile gathering.

At the lighted and richly decorated altar, gleaming like a jewel, the priest officiated in festal vestments, assisted by two soldiers wearing the Red Cross armlet. It was fitting that the acolytes of such a ceremony should have been chosen from amongst the few whose duty it is to help and cure in these times when it seems to be the duty of the greater part of humanity to injure and kill their fellow men.

What deep, earnest thoughts, what prayers for strength and courage, what calls for help and safety, what striving to keep up stout hearts, what anxious and loving anxiety for the dear absent ones, filled the hearts of all those simple souls!

They all seemed to have the same expression on their faces, earnest, resolute, determined, and if many of them had tears rolling down their cheeks and a strained look of longing and grief in their eyes, who can blame them?

Now that I find myself in the antechamber of War, it is in all the small abnormalities of everyday life that I realize more fully what the word “War” means. As in this moving sight to-day, where I saw a huge building filled entirely with soldiers, a priest preaching his sermon with the Red Cross armlet and two silver stars on his collar proclaiming the army chaplain, the tri-color flag—the only ornament on the bare gray walls—the words of the sermon speaking of the



enemy at the gates who must be vanquished, what strange and unaccustomed things to be seen and heard in ordinary days!—and yet, now and here it all seems quite natural.

It was the Feast of the Assumption; we have always gone to Mass on that day; the Duomo Vecchio has always stood there; a sermon has always been preached; the sky is just as blue; the sun as bright as in the past; we speak, we move, we go, we come, as we have always done . . . but then we suddenly realize that the Duomo is filled only with soldiers, our priest speaks of the enemy, he speaks of our brothers who are writing with letters of blood the glory of Italy's name on the snow of the Alps, our tricolor has the place of honor over the altar, tears are in strong men's eyes, and so we know that all is not as it used to be, and that sorrow and strife are abroad.

Yet it all seems, since three short months ago, so much a part of ourselves that it is only by remembering the past that we realize how all has changed. But it is because every man there felt that he was going to fight for a just cause, because he knew that he had the blessing of the Church to speed him on his way, that he could stand there strong in his faith and his love of country, calm, determined and hopeful.

The gentle-voiced army chaplain spoke to the soldiers of the duty they owed to their King and country, to that beautiful Italian land which was theirs and which he said was like a smile of Providence. He implored them not to forget the courtesy and generosity of their Latin blood in their dealings with the enemy, so that the Austrians might say in all truth that when the Italian soldier fought he behaved like a hero, but when he was the victor they found in him a brother.

And as they listened, the men who

had so willingly answered their country's call remembered that their enemies were but men like themselves, that each man, too, was dear to some woman who prayed and ached for him, that he, too, had left his home to fight for his country, and carried in his heart the picture of peaceful and happy bygone days, and among all those anxious, perplexed and simple souls, not one of them but registered a vow that when the time came he would remember and follow what his priest had told him! And as if with one voice, the Italian soldier, strong in his faith and love of country, joined the priest in the soldier's prayer:—

"O God, Thou Who art the supreme Justice and the supreme Power, Thou Who madest of Italy the garden of the world and gave her the smile of sky, sun and sea, which has brought forth a race of strong men, the guardians of justice and right, O Lord, hear Thou our prayer.

"Bless our arms, bless our leaders, bless our father and sovereign the King, who is both generous and good.

"Bless, O Lord, our mothers, our wives, our sisters, our little children, who in our well-remembered homes are living the long hours of their anxious vigil.

"Bless, O Lord, our arms, so that from our sacrifices and from our blood, our country may rise up, greater and nobler, and a time of peace, prosperity, and glory may come for her and crown our endeavor.

"Our Lord, and our Father, we beseech Thee, hear us. Amen."

When they had finished this prayer, the Italian soldiers felt that they had said all that was to be said, and that now the time for action was come, so they left the sacred building in silence and went soberly on their way, intent only on doing their duty with all their hearts and souls to the very end!



Brescia, August 18th, 1915.

As I walked slowly up the long, winding road that leads to the historic Castello which dominates Brescia and has stood guard over the town for so many years, I wondered whether the world fully realized the magnitude of the task which Italy has undertaken in going to war, and the splendid spirit which is shown by the whole nation. Nowhere more than in this border town can one grasp the full significance of the risks and sacrifices which the Italian people have willingly faced.

All the history of Brescia is one long struggle with her Teutonic neighbor; the historic and epic "Ten days" during which the town resisted the Austrian garrison that held the Castello are not so far off that the people of Brescia did not know the dangers they ran in wanting war. They well knew that in the case of a fortunate Austrian offensive they would be the first to pay the toll, and it would be a heavy one, yet they were amongst the first to want war. I hear that some time before the mobilization most of the men here were making all preparations for putting their affairs in order, making their wills, and even procuring warm clothing for the mountain campaign they anticipated. Small, everyday details these, seemingly far remote from the more spectacular happenings of diplomatic *coups de théâtre*, illustrating, however, the feelings that animated the Brescia people; but nowadays for a war correspondent to feel and understand the war spirit of a country, it is not seeing big battles, watching the troops go by, hearing the boom of the guns that matter. These are the same in all warfare and have been described, *ad infinitum*, for the past year. It is living and mixing with the people, hearing their thoughts, listening to their hopes, and associating with the daily life that they

must live even though actual warfare is taking place at their very gates, which enables one to grasp the different ways in which war is felt by the different nations; one can hope, this way, to get nearer to an understanding of the heart of the people.

The psychology of every Italian town is different, a fact due, no doubt, to geographical and topographical reasons, and also to the history of this wonderful country all through the ages. For centuries each town was practically an independent State, with its particular dialect, its particular customs, and, alas! often with its own particular foreign ruler. So it is that the unity with which the whole of the kingdom wanted this war is a most important fact in the history of the country, and marks the true birth of our national consciousness, as being part of a united whole, called *Italians*, no longer differentiating itself in Milanese, Romans, Sicilians, &c. Officially this unity has existed since 1870, but though in theory this was so, the real spirit of national unity was not there, and this spirit has now been born by the unanimous enthusiasm for the war which swept over the country!

The people of Brescia have been heroic, because they knew so well what an Austrian invasion would mean. This province is but a monument to the heroes—martyrs of Austrian despotism. Not one family here but remembers in its history a victim of Austrian rule.

The year 1849 is not so far back that the tragic repression of the Austrian General Haynau is as yet forgotten. And yet to be here in this beautiful town to-day, one would not think that death and sorrow were so near to it.

Brescia is full of life, of suppressed excitement, of movement, of keen determination; the pulse of life beats

high, soldiers come and go, military motor-cars rush past, cafés are crowded, but it is officers and soldiers who compose the crowd, all bringing their eager spirit to enliven and brighten, by the feeling of intense activity and purposeful determination, the atmosphere of the place.

Of all this I thought as I walked slowly up the steep hill that was leading me to the Castello. I looked down on the town standing with its red roofs and many spires, in the beautiful Lombard plain, the range of the Alps with its distant snows rising up to the north, and I marvelled at the peace and calm all around me.

The Castello came into view. Remembering that it had stood there since the year 1158, it seemed to me to sound a note of comfort. I thought I heard it say: "Oh, people of Italy, be calm, be hopeful, be brave. I have seen so much strife, have been attacked so often, I have suffered so much, and yet I am still here to-day, having stood and withheld the storms through all these centuries, because I stand for an ideal, the ideal of love of country, each man master of the soil on which he was born, and that ideal cannot be broken! So be of good heart and remember that the cause for which millions of men are shedding their life's blood is a just and a righteous one—the cause of democracy against despotism, of the mastery of the gentle spirit of the Latin race over the ruthless cruelty of the German barbarian." And as if to illustrate more poignantly this message of hope and courage which the grand old pile was giving me, I beheld away up on the bastion of the Castello, a group of men standing aimlessly about, watching with longing looks the far-away mountains. Their gray uniforms stood out clearly against the blue sky. By the peculiar shape of their caps I saw they were

Austrian prisoners—a thousand men confined in that narrow space—Czechs, Croats, Hungarians, Moravians; there they stood as prisoners in the year 1915, as their people had stood as masters in the year 1849! As they walked aimlessly up and down the narrow space they sang a monotonous tune in a minor key easily distinguishable as being a popular Slav melody. Below them on the drawbridge a group of Italian territorials, gray-haired and gentle, listened, looking soberly up at them. Just two groups of men, with the same fallings, the same qualities, the same sorrows, and the same joys that are common to all humanity, and yet there was a world between them. And so I left them—the victors and the vanquished standing under the same sunshine and the same summer sky to which, as men, they both had a right, and I wondered much that such things could be!

#### THE TRENTINO IN TRENCH TIME.

*August 21st, 1915.*

Yesterday was the most thrilling day of my life. I passed it right in the very midst of the war zone, having been fortunate enough to be allowed, as the only woman correspondent, to join the other representatives of the Italian and foreign papers who are up here in the Trentino. Being an Italian by birth, this experience is doubly wonderful to me, as it enables me to see at close quarters the splendid work which my countrymen have done and are doing, and also to have had the privilege of being the first Italian woman to cross the new boundary line between Italy and Austria.

It was an unforgettable moment, and as we advanced further into what, till a short three months ago, had been Austrian territory, I felt as if I were treading on sacred ground, consecrated by the blood of my people, who had willingly given up their

lives to restore to Italy that which was hers.

It is only when one finds oneself up in these parts that one realizes the unnatural conditions that prevailed. Notwithstanding the political frontier, which made of the Trentino Austrian property, the population who lived beyond it were all Italians, they spoke Italian, they looked Italian, they had Italian names, Italian customs, Italian souls, and yet they had to live and have their being under Teutonic rule, governed by a race which did not understand them, did not know either their language or their hearts, oppressed them and suspected them all the time. Moreover, everyone likes to have privacy in his own house and to be able to shut the door on the outside world, but up here Italy had perforce to keep her gate open to all comers, she was always on the alert, and had to keep a night and day watch. Her unnatural frontier line extended up a valley and stopped abruptly at the foot of an apparently inaccessible range of high mountains. The strangers looked down on her through a perpetually open door, so there was never either security or rest in the life of our country, and our eyes turned incessantly towards the open way that we could never bar. As in the well-remembered fairy tale of our children's days, we kept asking "Sister Anne" whether she saw any one coming, and though for many years she could answer us as in the story: "I only see the grass that is growing and the snows that are eternal," we never felt at rest and were continually on the watch. Thank Heaven, now that we have scaled the insurmountable heights, though the way to go is yet hard and arduous, we can feel that it is we who stand on the first line of the mountains which are our natural border. Our back-door is shut; it only has a latch on as yet, but soon

it will be firmly barred and locked and we will come into our own again!

More fitting scenery for a frontier line I have never seen—great, steady, immovable lines of towering peaks shut off the view; below stretch the valleys green and luxuriant, with vines, maize, green pastures and running brooks!

My first thrill came when the motor was stopped at the entrance to a little town (the first Austrian town beyond the frontier of three months ago) by our soldiers, saw our flag flying over the Town Hall, the Austrian arms gone, and the words "Regno d'Italia" following the name of the town on the building.

I will spare you the details of the formalities that have to be gone through in time of war in military-governed localities. Journalists seem to find a peculiar fascination in recounting to the world their own personal experiences in that line, and as I confess to having always been very bored when as one of the public I read about them in the papers, I will try to suppress them, and get to the big moment, the moment when I first came face to face with war, and heard the Captain who accompanied us say: "There on that peak stands the Austrian fort, a little nearer is the observation point, from which through their field-glasses, the enemy is watching us." And here, notwithstanding the good resolutions made a few moments ago, I must talk about myself and my sensations.

Well, I just felt very scared and wanted to get behind some sort of shelter. And then, as never before, I realized the wonderful and awe-inspiring courage which is to be found in millions of men these days, and my heart was filled with the most boundless admiration and enthusiasm for all the soldiers of the nations who are fighting, for those men who, day after

day, are facing a destructive force which may come towards them at any moment and against which they are practically powerless. I also understood how instinctive was the idea of digging up the earth and making trenches, as all one can think of is to put some sort of shield between one and the hidden danger, the same sort of instinctive movement that makes us put up our hand before our face to shield it when a hard object comes flying towards us through space, be it only "confetti" or a bunch of flowers in carnival time.

So, hearing that, given certain conditions (which fortunately did not exist at the time), the Austrian fire could reach us, I looked round immediately for a shelter, and though I had never seen a trench, nor even pictured one, notwithstanding the many descriptions I had read, I knew without being told that those queer-looking mounds of earth covered with grass and little shrubs which I saw before me were trenches. I made for them quickly, and felt much more at ease when I found myself by one of the big, dark-painted guns that were keeping guard beneath the shelter of the trench. Not very heroic, I know, but quite truthful, and, being only a woman, it does not matter.

Two sorts of trenches are seen, those built with cement, and those dug out in the ground, earth filled up on top.

The cement ones are like catacombs, they are more comfortable and probably much better than the others, but they are infinitely less picturesque, also they gave me the impression that war was becoming an institution, and that in the new order of things, to build a permanent trench as up-to-date and as comfortable as possible, was to be the ambition of many rising young architects and engineers; in fact, it was a new line of their business in

which they were going to specialize.

The old-fashioned trench gives the war a less permanent feeling. It is open at the back, the walls are of earth, the rain enters, the wind blows through, and the sun shines on it, but though more primitive it is more comforting as one feels that it is only a hurried makeshift as quickly abandoned as built.

Choosing between the two, I would probably prefer to live in the cement one; as a spectator I get more comfort in seeing the others. I feel that they are so uncomfortable that they cannot have come to stay.

As we went along a heavy gray motor-lorry passed us; it carried the post. We caught it up and saw it stop. Suddenly, where we had only seen an encampment of white tents and tethered horses grazing in the sunshine, we beheld a swarm of men rushing up from all sides and surrounding it. Eager hands were held out, the dialects of the North and the South mingled, voicing the same question: "Any letters for me?" For an instant all those men were carried back to their old life, the life they forgot in the many duties that filled their days. They were no longer soldiers, they became private citizens. Civilization caught them in its grip again. It seemed to me that their faces changed and got marked again with the stamp of personal, egoistical engrossment which town life gives. They lost for a moment the typical soldier expression which I had noticed all through the various places I had been; curiously enough, it is care-free; the healthy open-air life, the manual labor, the lack of personal responsibility, bring back to the men's eyes the clear, *insouciant* look of childhood. It soon came back when they had read their news and were comforted, knowing that those dear ones at home were well and thought of them.

Our men look so fit. Their gray-green uniforms are most practical, they blend perfectly with the green background of the country and stand the test of wear and tear wonderfully well, enabling the soldiers to look neat, even though they have been on a long march.

As for me, I have never seen so many nice-looking men, nor so many men assembled together as I did on that day. Soldiers, soldiers, nothing but soldiers—all seemed young, all were wiry-looking, and, what is more, all looked really and truly happy. They seemed to have gone back to boyhood days. This youthful spirit was very noticeable amongst the group of fourteen or fifteen officers with whom we lunched. Such childish jokes, such laughter and amusement over a little colored statuette of the Austrian Emperor "Cecco Beppe," as they call him, using the Italian diminutives of his two names, "Francesco-Giuseppe." They tied a string round the neck of this little statuette of the Emperor, wearing his *uniform de gala*, and hung him up to a wooden gibbet made by one of the soldiers, who all enjoyed the joke immensely. We stood him on the middle of the table, talked to him about his sins, how he ought to reform in his old age, told him how very soon we would be in Vienna, how splendid we were, and how much we enjoyed fighting his soldiers who fought well and were worthy opponents—just like school-boys! But, alas! we are no longer school-boys, and after a while the grim realities that surround us came back, and we remembered that the Emperor was a very old man, that he had had a tragic life, and we put his effigy away, and though the whole spirit of our soldier hosts is one of cheerful determination and courage, we knew, and they knew, that death could claim them at any moment, so we began to

talk more soberly. They asked us about their home towns, about the latest news (the last paper they had read was several days old), they spoke about England and the sympathy and understanding that had always existed between the two countries.

And so we sat and watched in the far distance the high mountains that still barred the way; we saw the little gray speck hidden among the trees on the mountain side where the enemy was sitting and watching, and I wondered at the strangeness of it all, and thought of the women at home who were waiting and watching too.

#### FROM VERONA TO ALA.

August 25th, 1915.

Impressions, sensations, unusual sights and scenes, keep passing so rapidly before me that I do not know how to disentangle and describe them. I continually feel that if this atmosphere in which I live is the atmosphere of war, then the actual making of war, notwithstanding the ideas of destruction always associated with it, is one of the most alive occupations that can be imagined. As I have said before, if this is war, then war is life!

Another strong impression I get is the lack of preoccupation around me. I see nothing but interest, bustle, activity. Here in Verona, where a few miles away the guns are at work, where aeroplanes drop bombs, where wounded soldiers are being brought, I see smiling faces and crowded streets. In the evening the town is supposed to be practically in darkness, but it is only as dark as an Italian town could ever be, for, to use the expression of a fellow-correspondent, to make it really dark, one ought first to extinguish the sparkle and light of Italian eyes. Perhaps it is the climate or the beauty of the setting, but I cannot as yet take this Italian war sadly. It seems to me to be only one arduous,



joyful struggle, carried through with smiles and songs, and a complete conviction of eventual success.

Artistically it is beautiful; as for example, to see on the old Roman amphitheatre, one of the treasures of Verona, the *Alpini* sentinels keeping watch for aeroplanes. One of the most banal and dull duties of warfare is thus transformed into a work of art for the beholder. To do sentinel work from the top of one of the most perfect monuments left by Roman genius is a sight that could only be seen in Italy. We have such an unconscious sense of the fitness of things that though any other soldier could do this *vedette* work, it is an *Alpino* who has been chosen. The Roman eagle is alive again in the person of the Alpine soldier. He wears one of its feathers as a pledge of the heights he has already scaled. I am sure the old amphitheatre knows that it is being guarded, after all these centuries, by one of its own sons, the men who are following the Roman tradition and proving to the world that the Roman eagle never dies.

One of the ironies of war happened a few days ago, when an enemy aeroplane flew over the town. It carried the Hungarian flag, red, white and green, like our own tricolor, the difference being in the disposition of the colors. It was at first taken for one of our own and received with cheers, which soon changed into a volley of shots when the bombs it carried began to drop. Apparently it was an unlucky aeroplane, for on getting back to the Austrian lines the same mistake about the flag occurred, and there again it was received with a volley of shots. I can only hope that in this case the cheers followed the shots. To be cheered by the enemy and fired at by friends must be a trying and unusual occurrence!

Many precautions have been taken

to protect the works of art at Verona. The most striking ones are those adopted on the statues of the celebrated Scaliger tombs. They have been huddled up in straw and sacking, with a thick coating of plaster of Paris over the whole. Thus transformed, these gems of Gothic art must fill the heart of Marinetti, the apostle of Futurism, with joy, as they look like nothing on earth.

Except for these few unusual details, the aspect of the town is quite normal, if one excepts the fact that of the population in the streets, four-fifths is made up of soldiers.

So much for Verona in war time.

#### ALA.

Ala looks so Italian that it is hard to believe that it has ever been anything else. Some of the names of the streets have already been altered; one is called "27 Maggio," the date when our soldiers occupied it. Another sign of the new *régime* is the bright-looking signboards over the tobacconists' shops, painted red, white and green, our national colors. On this patriotic background is written "*Salute e Tabacchi*." Curiously enough, in Italy, salt being a Government monopoly, like tobacco, it is sold in the same shops.

Soldiers everywhere, fully armed, a great request for and exhibiting of safe conducts, movement and activity all around, a strong wind blowing down the narrow gorge in which the town stands. Such is my first impression of Ala on this August morning. Seeing a conquered town for the first time is much less thrilling than I imagined it would be. In this case, it is due, of course, to the utter *Italianity* of this town. I can't insist too often or too strongly on this point, as it explains the reason for this war in a few words. All the names of the shops, for instance, are written in Italian.



Apparently they have always been so, as most of them look old and weather-beaten, as if they had always stood there. Italian is spoken by everyone, Italian food is eaten, Italian customs prevail. The only Austrian looking things I observed were the way the girls arranged their hair, wearing it in the German fashion, parted in the middle, with little round bunches of plaits over each ear, and a black velvet band across the forehead. Also I saw a priest, probably an Austrian, at least most Austrian looking, wearing a bowler hat, and striking a very discordant note in the otherwise Italian picture.

The attitude of the clergy has been a serious difficulty for us. Most of the priests have had to be sent away. It has been their policy for years to create ill feeling for Italy amongst the population, the population that was Italian in all but name. How far they have succeeded it is difficult to say, as most of the men of the district have had to leave, either because of their military duties, or because they were removed by the Austrian authorities as soon as war broke out. There remain only old men, women and children. These cannot give one a right idea of the spirit of the place, lacking as they do the vital force of opinions that go to make strong political feelings. At any rate, the population that remains at Ala is not hostile, even though as yet it may not be overwhelmingly cordial. The smiles and unfailing courtesy of the Italian soldiers, will soon have their effect. Already it appears that the girls are seen to smile back sometimes, when a handsome soldier boy passes their way. Our doctors and our priests will do the rest. The similarity of language and of customs is too great not to be felt after a short time. That all these poor souls are at present perplexed and worried is not to be wondered at, for the Aus-

trian forts are very close yet, and talk very forcibly at times. We saw them and heard them.

We were taken to see the wonderful feats of our *genio*, building solid stone trenches in the most fantastically ungetatable places on the steep mountain side. Real marvels of engineering skill.

As the party was numerous, the motors had to be left and hidden behind the bend of the road. As it was, the General who courteously showed me everything he could, told me he was rather nervous about taking me up on the mountain, which was only a mile distant from the Austrian batteries, and in full view of them. Luckily it was midday, probably their lunch time, and so they left us alone.

What a climb it was up that steep mountain side! It felt lonely, too, perched up between earth and sky. I thought of the millions of men, each of whom was doing his little bit, fighting with his brain the eternal forces that nature had accumulated all through the centuries, his only strength being the intangible ideal which was in him, and for which he was working.

I also saw the field hospital. I wondered if there I would find another atmosphere. But no! The same smile, the same eagerness were there. I saw a big ward full of *Alpini* lying, happy, patient, eager to be up and doing again. Splendidly strong in their weakness. They had all been wounded in the same action, when their captain, lieutenant, and first sergeant had fallen, and they had been led by a young boy.

"We cut all the wire entanglements right through," one of them told me. "But my finger got cut off too," said another, "and I've got to get even with the fellow who did it."

These two phrases are enough to show the spirit that reigned in that

ward. The hospital is splendidly equipped, very clean, with all the latest improvements. A cleverly built sterilizing apparatus enables the doctor to have always at hand, even in open country, antiseptic material for the first dressing of wounds, the most important of all. I was told by the head surgeon of one of the Red Cross hospitals here in Verona, that all the wounded coming straight from the front (he had 250 men) had been so well treated by the military doctors that there was not a case of infection or inflammation amongst them.

Another impression of my day at Ala is the following. Dominating the main thoroughfare, on a hill some little distance away, stands an ugly square house, built by a citizen of the town who made his fortune in South America. It is called the "Villa Brasile," an ugly name for an ugly building. The Austrian headquarters were there, and they held it when the first Italian contingent came up the narrow streets. The Austrians had entrenched themselves behind the thick high walls which separate all the fields, vineyards and gardens from the main road in all regions around Ala. It appears that this expensive system of dividing properties prevails all through the country that leads up to Rovereto. As it starts abruptly the moment the old frontier line is passed, and what used to be Austrian territory begins, it is obvious that the building of these solid and expensive walls was part of a calculated Austrian plan. They afford innumerable opportunities for shelter on the one side, and for perpetual treacherous attack on the other; quite an ideal and apparently innocent arrangement.

To go back to the Villa Brasile, the Austrian staff used both the villa and the walls as protection. Up the little narrow street came our men, facing the fire, and though the shutters of

the houses on both sides of them were closed, it appears that shots were also being fired down upon them. The vulgar ugliness of the pink façade of the little villa got on their nerves; it offended their artistic sense to have such a vulgar opponent. The word was passed, our artillery decided to try a *tour de force*, and show the enemy what Italian skill could do. They promised themselves to dislodge the Austrians from the Villa Brasile without firing a shot that would injure its outside architecture. And they did it! Every single shot they fired got in through one of the many windows. As regularly as clockwork each window was aimed at in turn. The shells passed through them, reducing the interior to a mass of ruins, and putting the Austrians to flight. And there the house stands to-day, outwardly untouched, a living proof of the sense of humor of our soldiers.

I am not capable of describing military operations and positions. All I see is the individual side—the human element. I love to remember my talk with an old Colonel, who has 3,000 men under his command, and who told me about the way he understood his responsibilities. He started by saying, rather apologetically, that he was glad his family was not near him, as it left his mind quite free to think only of one thing—his men. That actual moment was all that counted, it was such a big moment that all the small petty trivialities of ordinary life had no place in it. I asked him what his regiment was. "I belong to the infantry," he said, "but though I know nothing of artillery in its detail, when I'm commanding an attack I am like an artist painting a big picture. On his palette he has all his colors, he disposes them, he blends them, he changes them, and he knows when to put in the darker shades that will concentrate and throw in relief the effect

he is seeking. And so it is with me; I know my infantry material thoroughly, but unconsciously I know when to use the black and powerful note of my artillery to bring about the result I want to achieve."

Unusually picturesque talk for a soldier, but then he is an Italian, and consequently an artist. Incredible as it may seem, this conversation was taking place as we walked along the sunny road, covered by the fire of Austrian guns, the shells of which could have reached us if the enemy had

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chosen to fire, and yet we neither of us thought of it!

I get impressions like these the whole time; bits of intimate thoughts which these brave men unconsciously tell me, because I am a woman and of their own country. It is all so simple, so sincere, so free from any premeditated effect that I think I can in truth believe that I am shown the real heart of our soldiers. As a human document it is infinitely precious. It is also a very sacred trust, and I treasure it deeply.

*Magdeleine verMehr.*

## THE TOLLHOUSE.

BY EVELYN ST. LEGER.

### CHAPTER VI.

Things began to happen very fast, so fast there was hardly time for us to give our minds to one thing before another was on us. The Belgians came, of course we knew they would, 'twasn't likely Sirenry, even backed by Mrs. Kidston, would be able to stand out against Miss Mary. So they came, and we formed a committee, with our Reverend Parson in the chair, and Mr. Butler as the treasurer; very interesting it was too, seeing after them poor things, and learning of all their sufferings, not that we could understand their talk, not even her ladyship, who can speak in three different languages, but not theirs, for theirs was gibberish pure and simple, as our own ears could tell.

What with the Belgians, and the Red Cross, and the work for the soldiers, you'd think we had enough to do; but we had to make time for prayer as well, every day. A list was made of our men's names and put up alongside the war-map on the Tollhouse; and we being such an old-fashioned village, Parson, as we call him, used to come at ten minutes to one and read out

their names and say a little prayer for us all to join in, the church being too far away for most of us, except on Sundays. One day, after he had finished, in the silence before we moved, there was an awful sob. We all turned round to see who it should be, and it was Alice—from-the-house. She was all bowed down and crumpled-like, and sobbing as if her heart would break.

Parson, he put his hands together again and bent back his head, looking as if he was speaking straight to God in heaven.

"And not only for those we have mentioned, but also for ourselves, O Saviour of the world, who by Thy Cross and Precious Blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord."

"We humbly beseech Thee, O Lord." Most of us said it, parrot-like, without knowing we were saying it. "Poor Alice, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord."

Mrs. Kidston moved, and signed to us to go. We went out quietly, leaving Parson and Alice behind. Young Davies told his mother that Alice's sweetheart had been wounded; he

didn't know any details, or how she had heard, but he knew all the servants-at-the-house were very sorry about it; so were we. Poor Alice!

The next day there was an awful casualty list in the papers, and we saw the name of Alice's private; and amongst the officers killed, we saw a cousin of Sirenry's—such a fine gentleman—who always came to shoot here every autumn. It seemed cruel to think of him put out of life by the Germans. Then we heard of horrors such as we couldn't believe; and folk began to talk of the retreat, and of our losing the war, and of the enemy coming to England; and altogether, what with one thing and another, and the seeing of Alice's sweetheart and Sirenry's cousin both in the same list, showing us how equal we all are in a time like this, the courage of the village just broke down, for the war had come home to us all.

Mrs. Kidston tried to be strong; but even she went up to the house for consolation; and while she was there the telephone rang, and Mr. Butler took the message down in writing, as he always does. When he took it to her ladyship, Miss Mary was in the boudoir talking to Mrs. Kidston; but she got up and read the message over her mother's shoulder. Then she went quite white, and Mrs. Kidston caught her, as she thought she was going to fall.

Her ladyship looked up as if she couldn't be sure what to do. Miss Mary said, "Oh, mother!" and walked to the window with her handkerchief pressed tight to her lips.

Mr. Butler said, "They're holding the line, m'lady."

Her ladyship nodded. "Say yes, we shall be very pleased."

Miss Mary tried to be brave. Mrs. Kidston said it was worse than if she hadn't tried. Her eyes were full of tears, but she kept them back from falling,

and bit her lips till all the blood went out of them. Her ladyship said, "I don't know what your father will say, darling. I hope I'm doing right."

"I don't care, mother!" Miss Mary said. "I don't care!" and Mrs. Kidston tried to withdraw.

Of course it was no use pretending that the village did not know the facts of the case pretty well after that. Not that Mrs. Kidston told a soul—we can all bear witness to that—but it got about, a little bit from one and a little bit from another; and Mrs. Davies, having been up scrubbing, helped to fit the story together, so that we knew as well as if we had been told up at the house.

The Primrose Captain had been ordered to the Front. We couldn't understand it, for as he had only just joined we didn't think he was fit to go so soon, and also we didn't know how he came to be a Captain, still there it was as told to us. And he had got a few hours' leave before starting, and, man-like, had wanted to see his very Best before he went. He had telephoned to the house and asked if he might come and say good-bye. He did not say who to specially, but just might he come and say good-bye, as he was ordered to the Front. This was the message Miss Mary had read when she cried out "Oh, mother!" Poor young lady, she didn't know what her ladyship would say; and there all in a moment she learnt that her Captain was going to the war and that she might never see him again.

If Sirenry had been at home we none of us know what would have happened, for Sirenry was all against the match. He didn't want Miss Mary to marry anyone—he wanted to keep her at home to amuse him when he was tired, and if she did marry someone later on he did not wish it to be the Primrose Captain; so her ladyship was in that dangerous position of having to choose

between her husband and her child.

It must have wrung her heart when she heard Miss Mary's cry and knew how they loved each other, and Sirenry all against the match, and knew that she had it in her power to make them happy or miserable. I don't believe the village could have thought so well of her ladyship ever again if she had acted differently from what she did: our village think a lot of her ladyship, but it thinks the world of Miss Mary.

So the Captain came, and we heard why he was a Captain, and why he was going out so soon was because of his experience in the Boer War. He had been through it when he was little more than a schoolboy; and, when Lord Kitchener knew that, of course he was glad to have him now, for this seems to be a bigger war than the other one, from the way people do talk.

Well, he came, and what he said and what she said is not for us to know; but the impression we all have on our minds is that our Miss Mary and the Primrose Captain mean to marry each other, whatever Sirenry says, so soon as the war is over, if not before.

When he'd gone, his name was put on the prayer list at the Tollhouse; and the next day, when we met together and Parson coming in a hurry had begun to pray, there was Miss Mary kneeling by the door, and she heard all the names given out—all our men and boys; and then we thought to hear her Captain's name, but it never came; and Parson, thinking he knew them all off by heart, never looking at the list, was beginning another prayer when the whole lot of us whispered together under our breath the same thing at the same moment.

"Miss Mary's man! You've forgot Miss Mary's man, sir."

#### CHAPTER VII.

The courage of the village broke

down. It wasn't only the Captain's going that did it: it was everything coming at once, you may say. The awful horrors we read of in the papers, the lists of wounded and killed, the death of our village postman—a Reservist, Alice's sweetheart wounded, Miss Mary's Captain gone, Sirenry always in London, and Master George wanting to go to the Front every day and her ladyship bravely dreading it. Then the talk of invasion by land and sea and air; though we did not believe it could happen, there were people outside the village who believed it could and maybe would; and when we thought of the Belgians and all their country had gone through, and of the women and children being tortured and their houses burnt and everything taken away from them, we couldn't help being depressed and miserable and it seemed no good trying. For these things that had happened to the Belgians might happen to us. If the Germans came, they would happen; and they would destroy us and our village with no more thought than they destroyed those beautiful towns with cathedrals and halls like we see in the *Daily Mail* pictures. It was fearful to think of, and our courage broke down.

Why we didn't remain broken is due to Mrs. Kidston.

To make a long story short, Mrs. Kidston told Alice one day of her visit to London, last spring year, when she went to the opening of Parliament. I believe it still lost nothing in the telling, for we had always found each new audience was as impressed as we had been originally. Alice was deeply moved, not only at the description of the first public appearance of the new German Ambassador, dragged through the streets—dragged and pushed as Mrs. Kidston invariably emphasized by gestures of arm and hand, illustrating the force of the London police, but also



by the light as she spoke sparkling in Mrs. Kidstons eyes.

Alice was thrilled, and asked why she had never heard this tale before. She had only been at the house some ten months or so, and, when she came, the story had become stale in the village or given way to something else of new importance. Interesting as the narrative was in itself, the real interest lay in our prophetess who, in her simple way, brought back courage to the village, and has been henceforth not without honor even in her own country during her own lifetime.

Alice went out of the Tollhouse full of what she had heard and seen. The first person she met was told by her of what Mrs. Kidston had said, and that person said, "Lor', now, fancy her remembering that!" Then Alice going east up to the house, and the other person going west through the village, both bearing the prophecy on the tips of their tongues, met and informed others, who caught fire with the light of memory and passed on; a flow of enthusiasm taking the place of former despondency and fear, which spread with as fervid a faith throughout our village and beyond.

We collected in groups on the cross roads, facing and gesticulating towards the Tollhouse. Mrs. Kidston was wonderful; she did not come out, but stayed within her own door, watching perchance the effect on our souls of the vision in her own.

The next day the housekeeper invited Mrs. Kidston to take tea in the room; the war was discussed, Mrs. Kidston's prophecy was revived, and hope from below stairs sprang upward through the house.

Miss Mary called at the Tollhouse the following morning, when I was there, just before prayer-time, and she said, "Do you remember, Nannie, what you saw in London last year, and how you felt it was an omen about the Ger-

mans in case of war?" Miss Mary said it lightly, just like that, as if it had only now occurred to her, and not at all as though her maid had mentioned it with reverence the night before when brushing her hair: mentioned it as if she were quoting Scripture or had just met one of the wonders of the world.

"Yes, Miss Mary, it lingers in my mind. Folk won't let me forget it, you see. They come round here with their long faces and their terrifying stories till I'm fair worried to death. 'Supposing the Germans win,' they whine, 'whatever shall we do?' 'They won't win,' I say. 'And how do you know, Mrs. Kidston,' they say; 'you can't be sure beforehand?' 'I am sure,' I say. 'Do you think it was for nothing that I was sent to London to see the sight I saw? The representative of German culture'—that's the word I see the papers all use, Miss Mary—'the representative of the great War Lord, in the hands of our police, him not able to make any progress but for their help, do you think this thing was an accident, or do you believe in the God above?' It was an omen, I say to them; and though many people saw what was happening it was given to me to see what it meant, and I can't forget it, Miss Mary; for at times, when the news is bad, this village do want reminding that one of themselves has been privileged to see what is really going to happen in the world, or they might be craven cowards for want of a word in season."

"Dear Nannie!" Miss Mary said, "I love to hear you talk. It does me a lot of good. Sometimes I'm a craven coward, Nannie, when I think of what's going on over there."

"I won't admit but what it's hard, Miss Mary, for all of us; but if you've once seen the vision you can't forget it. Why the dear Lord lifted a corner of the curtain for me, I can't pretend



to say; but that He never despises the humblest soul, and, maybe, looking down on His children having a family squabble—for that's what it comes to, Miss Mary, when you think of the royal people on both sides, all blood connections of Queen Victoria—it may be when He sees the German Emperor so impudent, giving orders to the Almighty what's to be done for his side, that the Lord may have looked round for somebody in England just the opposite of the German Emperor, and He thought to use me, because—well, nobody here in their senses would ever think to use me for a contrast to the Kaiser. But, 'what I do,' He once said, 'thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.' That seems to explain many things, to my way of thinking, when doubts arise."

"Dear Nannie!" Miss Mary said again, "your faith is very comforting."

"I've always found it a comfort not to be clever," Mrs. Kidston said, "for then you can believe. Intellect has never been the snare to me that it has to the Kaiser; nor I've never wished it should."

#### CHAPTER VIII.

The swing of the pendulum had set in with us, and, from wandering miserably in the depths of depression, we now climbed the mountains of hope and sat there almost twanging our harps of victory.

Mrs. Kidston's omen was talked of in the village next our own, and was given unhesitatingly as a reason for the faith that is in us when our spirits stand the test of bad rumors which assail us from time to time.

The fame of our prophetess also spread to the town, and vulgar people came out on their bicycles and their sidcars to see Mrs. Kidston and have their fortunes told—which of course she would be able to do, as they thought, not knowing our lady as well

as we do. Mrs. Kidston's indignation was amusing to see. She refused to speak with the curious, more than just to be very polite and say they had come to the wrong house; on being pressed, she "really couldn't say" who the fortune-teller could be: not in our village, she had never heard of one, only the witch of Endor she knew, who had come to a bad end long ago. The less vulgar, feeling they must have made a mistake, would then soothe Mrs. Kidston's ruffled fur sufficiently for them to draw from her the origin of her apparently misplaced fame.

Once a week, or at the most twice, Mrs. Kidston would permit herself the pleasure of relating her experience to a new audience—that is, if they approached her in the right spirit; and bits of these audiences drifting away to other villages and towns, told the tale with various additions, so that the faith of many was strengthened, and a great belief in the power of Old England came out solid in the mass of people with whom our village was in touch. It astonished us when Parson came back from his holiday to hear that in his club in London one evening, he had listened to some men talking about the German Emperor, and telling each other what a Magi had said long ago and of how true it was coming. Another one said the most marvellous prophecy was two hundred years old, and had been made by a monk; and another one knew this war had been foretold by a gipsy early in this very year, and it was to be found in some almanac that nobody bought at the time but is now in great demand all over the United Kingdom. Then, imagine our Parson's surprise when another man, who looked like a soldier, said, "Well, the best I've heard, so far, is absolutely true; I know the old woman and I know the village where she lives, for I have stayed at the house there for

a cricket-match. She knows that England is going to win this war, and she bases her knowledge not on a dream or a vision, but on a fact that when it happened revealed itself to her as an omen." Thereupon the gentleman told the other gentlemen about the German Ambassador being dragged to Parliament by the London police, and how that was his first appearance in public just when he wanted to make a fine show, and his Princess there beside him, and the crowd looking on and all; and how this old lady from the country, meaning Mrs. Kidston, watching with all her eyes, had seen in this predicament an omen of the future, and, what was more, she was using this insight to some purpose. She had heartened up the neighborhood where she lived to such a degree that you couldn't mention the possibility of Germany winning anywhere within fifty miles of her, without risking a very forcible argument and probably a row.

Parson says he lay back in his chair and laughed to himself, and wished Mrs. Kidston could hear. One of the other gentlemen said, "But when was this—I don't remember it?" And the soldier gentleman said it was a year or two ago, and he remembered seeing something about it in the papers; but it had not impressed him very much as he had not been there at the time, and very few people spoke of it at all.

"Was it Count Bieberstein?" somebody asked him.

"No; Bieberstein died, you remember, very suddenly, and Prince Lichnowsky took his place."

"They don't seem to be lucky over here," another one said; and then Parson joined in and told them the old lady was Mrs. Kidston, and not very old either, and was a parishioner of his.

(I've got him to write down those names for me, so they are all right.)

But fifty miles! that was what struck us all of a heap. That the faith of our village in Mrs. Kidston's omen had spread over fifty miles away, and was having a real effect on other people! It did seem strange and rather wonderful till Parson explained that it was in the same way as with the Russians. "Everybody bucked up all over England," he said, "and felt as strong again when a porter let out that secret to a traveller on the line." So just in the same manner Mrs. Kidston was a public benefactor for seeing what she saw and for telling it in a plain way to be understood of the people. He himself should go on repeating it till the end of the war that Germany is going to be beaten and England has nothing to fear, on the plain word of Mrs. Kidston.

Maria Davies, who says strange things out of her head sometimes without thinking, said suddenly:

"Seems as if you ought to marry them, sir!"

Parson turned round. "Marry them, Mrs. Davies? Marry who?"

"The porter and Mrs. Kidston—the Russian porter," said Maria, giggling hysterically.

Mrs. Kidston walked up to the woman, placed her hand on her shoulder and put her outside the door. Outside the door, she did, without a word. Full of dignity is Mrs. Kidston, caught in from her ladyship, or copied it, we fancy.

Now, lest we should be uplifted by having a propheticess in our midst, the very seal of our faith bearing so perfect an impression had to be shown to us on the other side. You never can tell what is going to be the result of your words, no more than you can tell where the rings on a pond will stop when you throw in a stone.

Mrs. Kidston's words, so far, had all been for good, no one will deny; but

after a bit, we heard the recruiting for Lord Kitchener's Army was not quite so strong as it was. None of us supposed this could be laid at Mrs. Kidston's door—she had nothing to do with recruiting, no more than having the prayer list for those who did it in her house; but will it be believed that, towards the end of October, Sirenry walked up the road one day with a gentleman beside him and took him in to see Mrs. Kidston? Nothing much in that, as our village is accustomed to seeing visitors from the house taken to call on Mrs. Kidston; and we don't envy her—not in a nasty way of envy—we think it's as it should be, considering her position in the family. But this gentleman was a soldier and a friend of Sirenry's at the War Office. Well, they both went in, and they began to talk to Mrs. Kidston about the omen, and they said what a great thing it was for us to believe that Germany couldn't beat us; and all the time Mrs. Kidston kept feeling something more was coming. And sure enough she was right. For this War-officer with Sirenry told her quite solemnly that the lads in our part of the country would no longer enlist, and the reason they gave for it was always the same reason—that it didn't matter who went to the war, whether many or few, for England was going to win anyhow. When the War Office in London heard this they were very puzzled—upset, some of them seem to have been—and they talked to the lads serious-like; but it wasn't no good, the boys, and the men too, were certain sure they needn't fight, Germany's downfall had been foretold along with England's triumph. "England's going to win, with us or without us! That's a fact, sir. England's going to win, sir!" That's what they all said. Then Lord Kitchener, or somebody high up, said they must trace back to the origin of this affair, and the War-officer—

this friend of Sirenry's—being the actual same man as Parson talked to on the subject in his club, said he could trace the origin without more ado. And trace it he did, right into our village, and through the door of our Tollhouse. We've known Mrs. Kidston for a wonderful woman all these years being and doing many things, but none of us ever knew she was an origin till the War Office found it out for us.

Then they wanted her help. Curious how big the little things do seem to grow at a time like this! and also *vice versa*, as the French saying is. Mrs. Kidston, not a very big person in any sense of the word, and our village not as you may say large, exactly, suddenly became more important than any market town within our knowledge. She was required to help the Government, who were anxious to have the Army such a size that we should in truth be able to frighten Germany as Germany had tried to frighten us.

"Of course we are going to win," the War-officer said, "we know that as well as you do, my dear madam," that's what he called her, she told us herself, when the conversation was over. "My dear madam, we know we are going to win; but you understand, Germany does not know it yet, and the sooner she does know it the quicker the war will be over; and the best way for her to know it is for the Emperor to see us with so vast an army that it will be useless for him to go on fighting us. Therefore, I beg that you will not only keep up the faith in your omen, which is of very great importance for the country, but that you will also use your influence with the unmarried men, and induce them to play their part in the most historical war the world has ever seen."

"There, Nannie!" said Sirenry, "you've got your work cut out for you!"

"Seems like a game of bluff, Sirenry, it do," Mrs. Kidston said; "but I'll tackle the men. They will understand that Germany doesn't know what we know, and I'll make them proud to think they can teach the Emperor something yet. Then they'll see a reason for fighting him, even though they know he's beat beforehand, according to the omen."

"That's exactly it, madam," the War-officer said, stroking his moustache and looking over Mrs. Kidston's head at her china cupboard beyond. "What a charming home you have here! I quite envy you living in the country."

"Don't mention it, sir," Mrs. Kidston said, always very quick with the right answer. "I was just as happy when I lived in London with the family, which I did do for many years."

"Quite so, quite so!" the War-officer said. And then Sirenry said "Good morning, Mrs. Kidston!" and they both went away down the road towards the house.

If this had happened to anybody else of the same standing as Mrs. Kidston, and in any other village of our sort, I should have said it was a fairy-tale and not to be believed; but there it is set down, gospel truth as it happened, and the pill in the jam only began to taste that evening when Alice-at-the-house brought some more flannel to be cut out by Mrs. Kidston's shears. Alice spoke of the War-officer to Mrs. Kidston as his lordship, and Mrs. Kidston winced. She hadn't known her visitor was a lord, and she had called him sir all the time. What made it so specially hard for Mrs. Kidston was that, with her gift of perception, she felt it was a thing she ought to have known.

#### CHAPTER IX.

The war had been going nearly three months when Master George

went out to it. Brave he was. Brave as a lion. He came down to say good-bye to her ladyship, and, returning through the village on his way to the station, he stopped at the Tollhouse, and Mrs. Kidston came running out, and he didn't wait a minute, he just put his arms round her neck and he said "Good-bye, Nannie," and he kissed her, and the motor went off again, with him turning round and waving his hand to the last.

Mrs. Kidston stood at the cross roads wiping her eyes, she didn't mind a bit who saw; none of us would have minded either, Master George going to the war was enough to make anybody cry. Dear young gentleman, only just nineteen, he did look brave as a lion in his khaki, there wasn't one of us but loved him and envied Mrs. Kidston a bit. Mrs. Kidston wiped her eyes again and took down the prayer list; she went into the house and presently came out and hung it up.

We knew, without seeing, that Master George's name had now been added to the others. His old Nannie had seen to that. Trust her!

All that day and all the next day, Mrs. Kidston was extremely busy with newspapers, scissors, and paste. The result of her efforts was read by us all on the third day. In large printing letters, written with the sharpened end of a match, was a new notice on the Tollhouse:

"FORTUNES TOLD HERE FOR NOTHING!"

Underneath this announcement was pasted cuttings from various accounts of the burning, sacking, and pillaging of Louvain, Rheims, and Antwerp; one or two short paragraphs concerning the torture and killing of old men, women, and children were added in a corner. Underneath this small print came again the large-written words of Mrs. Kidston's hand:

"THIS IS WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO US IF YOU DON'T GO TO THE WAR!"

Alongside, hung Lord Kitchener's appeal for his new army, together with a fresh map of the present situation.

On next market-day, you might have thought our Tollhouse was the hub of the universe. The people crowded round, both going and coming. They fetched others to read, and Mrs. Kidston sat in her doorway knitting, and graciously answering any questions put to her—quite unusual for Mrs. Kidston except for a member of the family; and when one of us braver than the rest asked her reason, she just looked at us and said, "Don't we want Master George home for Christmas?"

We like to think our lady of the village had her reward. The recruiting did improve all round us. Most days the butcher, going through, would stop and give a name or two of some young fellow he knew; and the baker's two sons and a nephew enlisted sudden-like, though they'd been against the war from the first; and by and by we began to hear so many had volunteered that several known personally to some of us had actually been refused, and the old high standard of measurements was required again after lapsing for a bit, and that told its own tale. We should have Master George home before Christmas.

The men enjoyed talking to Mrs. Kidston; we never knew exactly what she said to them, but it seemed to be what they liked. They went off laughing, "to frighten the Germans," as they said, and to play football with the Allies in France.

Now we are into November, and the lists—those awful lists—are coming out most days in the papers. We hold our breaths as we read them; and when our men are not mentioned, we have our daily prayer mixed with thanksgiving at the Tollhouse that they are still safe, and that Miss Mary

is still getting letters from the Primrose Captain.

The family are in mourning—leastways they are in black or black and white, for cousins who had been mentioned in dispatches and then died, and for a sailor uncle of her ladyship's and his young son, a midshipman, who had gone down in the North Sea. 'Twas dreadful it was, no one spared their toll of suffering. Alice's sweetheart got home wounded, and into hospital in London, and she was let go and see him, taking him beautiful flowers she did, and fruit too, and stayed with his mother at Brixton for two days, and came home that excited at all she heard and the doings of his regiment—quite a heroine she seemed with him for a hero.

Then, one day, there was a hush when nothing seemed to be happening, very quiet-like it was, and towards evening a rumor began to stir amongst us. I don't know where it came from, but it settled in our bones that something was amiss. The servants-at-the-house told Mrs. Davies there had been a lot of telephoning to her ladyship, they did not know what it was, for no messages were given to them; her ladyship herself was wanted each time.

When Parson came for prayer next morning, he said there was very grave news, and he feared the family were in trouble; Miss Mary's man was missing, and to-day's paper gave his name under the double heading—"Wounded and Missing."

Wounded and missing!—the Primrose Captain! Miss Mary's man! We hated to hear it. We wouldn't believe harm could come to him—not to Miss Mary's man. Dear Lord, not to Miss Mary's man. We knelt on a little longer than usual in silence. I doubt if we were praying in words, yet the desire of each of us was possibly



wafted to heaven by old Davies. In a shaking voice the old man breathed out, "O Lord, take my boy . . . he's the only one I have . . . my only son . . . but I give him, Lord, . . . if so be . . . as he'll do instead of . . . Miss Mary's man. . . ." His voice broke, and he was scarcely audible. . . . "O Lord, take my boy from me, I pray, I pray, . . . but spare Miss Mary's man for her. Oh! spare Miss Mary's man." We all murmured it after him, and Parson he said it too, very softly. "Spare Miss Mary's man, we pray thee, good Lord. Amen. Amen."

Did the Primrose Captain know, far away on the battlefield, what we were doing in the Tollhouse for him? There wasn't a man nor a woman in that little room but didn't agree with old Davies. There wasn't one of us that in spirit didn't offer our best, there

and then, so long as Miss Mary might keep hers.

When we rose, Mrs. Davies was crying; but she said "Amen" with the rest of us, and she took the old man's arm and led him out very gently. They all disappeared, and I was left last—alone with Mrs. Kidston.

"Speaking for the village," I said, that's the sacrifice not of one, but of all."

Mrs. Kidston agreed. "Of all," she said. "We are ready to give; but the Lord—will He take our offerings? I fear it's against nature." She looked through the doorway and over the tree-tops in the sunshine. "If the Lord of Hosts wants a soldier up there in the blue, and He sees the Primrose Captain, why it's only nature to take him instead of old Davies' son, same as the Germans would. It's only nature, my dear, I'm thinking."

(To be continued.)

## NATURE IN TENNYSON.

### II. TREES.

This article was originally entitled *The Greatness of Tennyson*, it being my object to call attention to some quality of his work in which he surpassed all other poets. For my part, I am scarcely dissatisfied with that title, yet I am aware that to some people it might appear exclusive, and to the few perhaps even immodest. But in any case I shall be content to leave his greatness to be guessed, while I dwell on his surpassing excellence as a poet of nature.

In the former division of this article<sup>1</sup> I pointed out that, apart from the fact of Tennyson's authorship falling within our latter days of scientific observation, his clear and restrained style contributed not a little to this excellence, and that the more exuber-

ant imagery of writers like Robert Browning, Francis Thompson, and George Meredith might have failed to give us such an exact and impressive presentation of the natural world.

As to Wordsworth, and a comparison of his position with Tennyson's as a poet of nature, the subject would require a separate essay. Here I can only repeat that Tennyson's later date gave him an enormous advantage, an advantage of which he fully availed himself.

From what I have said of Tennyson's bird-lore, in the former part of this article, we may realize his acquaintance with the whole of animated nature; but not less remarkable nor less attractive, though better known perhaps, is the extent to which the various members of the vegetable kingdom enter into his verse; and of

<sup>1</sup> "The Living Age," Oct. 16, 1915.



course, as in the former case, they glorify it while they themselves are glorified.

I choose trees, partly because the subject is one among a large number in Tennyson that have attracted less attention than they deserve—less, for instance, than the flowers that are so familiar to his readers; yet in my opinion what he tells us about oak or elm or ash is still more striking.

But before proceeding with the second division of my subject, I should like to add a short appendix to my former article. The following bit of realism is worth noting—"the lark Shot up and shrilled in *flickering gyres*," with which we may compare George Meredith's—"the larks from *running rings* pour showers," and his—"Rounding on thy breast sings the dew-delighted skylark."

So again in Tennyson we find a description of the same characteristic in regard to another bird—"to sweep In ever-highering *eagle-circles* up." This mention of the eagle reminds us of Tennyson's not very notable *Fragment (the Eagle)*; more noteworthy, however, is this finely condensed figure—"Hope, a poising eagle, burns Above the unrisen morrow," which is sketched both finely and elaborately by Shelley in his poem *The Cloud*.<sup>2</sup>

Two other birds are deserving of mention in this after-note; they are the bulbul and the bird of Paradise. The bulbul appears first in the *Arabian Nights*, and later, in *The Princess*—

"Not for thee," she said,  
"O bulbul, any rose of Gulistan  
Shall burst her veil";

that is to say, "No rose in that Persian garden of roses will open her bosom to the serenading of such a nightingale as you are." Experts, however, would tell us that in spite

<sup>2</sup> Professor A. S. Cook quotes parallels from Schiller and Lowell.

of this pretty and long-standing legend, the bulbul cannot be identified with the nightingale.

The second of these two birds has also its legendary associations, for in Tennyson's delightful *Day-Dream* we read of—

long-tail'd birds of Paradise  
That float thro' Heaven, and cannot  
light,

which we may compare with Marvel's fine simile:

The bird named from the Paradise you  
sing  
So never flags, but always keeps on  
wing.

The myth seems to have had its origin in the fact that in old times only the footless feathered skins of the birds found their way to the markets of Europe.

The "roof-haunting martins" should find a place in this appendix, especially as they adorn the poet's verse with an admirable figure—

the little thorp that lies so close  
And almost plaster'd like a martin's  
nest  
To these old walls;

and here is another excellent figure, for which we are chiefly indebted to the linnæist—

As the thistle shakes  
When three gray linnets wrangle for  
the seed.

With regard to the somewhat doubtful "steaming marshes of the scarlet cranes" in the former article, which I quoted from an early poem by Tennyson—*The Progress of Spring*—I may now mention that "the scarlet crane" appears in another early poem, *Anacana*, which is printed in the *Memoir* of Tennyson (i. 57), where we find the following note: "Perhaps the scarlet ibis, *guara rubra*, not now known to visit Hayti." And this example of Tennyson's youthful imagery (twice or thrice repeated, as was often the case),

leads me to make a general remark on the accuracy of his transcripts from nature. He had, as I believe, a scientific bent; how could he otherwise have given us (it was somewhere between 1833 and 1842) those marvellous forecasts of aerial warfare which have found their ghastly realization in this world-war of nearly a century later—"the nations' aery navies grappling in the central blue"? But whatever interest the poet may have taken in the scientific movements of his day, and whatever his general proficiency in science, we must always, when judging him under this head, bear carefully in mind the date at which he wrote; for, as we may notice again later, even Tennyson had something to learn during sixty years of authorship; and we have further to bear in mind the fact that science itself has found something to learn since the time when he ceased writing. With this remark I leave without further discussion such questions as that of *crow* and *rook* in my former article, to which may now be added the poet's belief in the "near kinship" of the *swift* and the *swallow*; and yet other examples will occur as we proceed.

Nor must it be supposed that I have done full justice even to one department of Tennyson's knowledge of the natural world—his bird-lore. I have by no means given a full list of the birds he mentions; the buzzard, for instance, and the parrot and the peacock, might be added, and their associations noted. But, returning now to the subject of trees, I will begin with the chestnuts, which in *The Miller's Daughter*

hung

In masses thick with milky cones.

Next we notice in *Aylmer's Field* how wonderfully minute and faithful—perhaps almost too minute and unfamiliar—is the comparison—

a but less vivid hue

Than of that islet in the chestnut-bloom

Flamed in his cheek.<sup>3</sup>

Next, as regards the leafage of the chestnut, how graceful and exact is the description in *Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere*—

And drooping chestnut-buds<sup>4</sup> began  
To spread into the perfect fan,  
Above the teeming ground.

And in *The Progress of Spring* the poet sees

the slowly-thickening chestnut towers  
Fill out the spaces by the barren tiles.  
In *The Brook* we come upon this apt comparison—

her hair

In gloss and hue the chestnut, when  
the shell

Divides threefold to show the fruit  
within;

and in *Memoriam*, when a light frost  
is thawing upon the trees in the early  
October morning, we hear

thro' the faded leaf

The chestnut pattering to the ground.

But we must proceed at random, without respect of poems, unless we mention *Amphion*. This barely successful essay at the humorous contains references to a large number of our English trees, and although the poet is scarcely in earnest, his descriptive touches are often of high poetic value: "The birch-tree swung her fragrant hair"; and indeed, whether in this connection, or in regard to the whole tenor of my subject, nothing can be more instructive than to compare Tennyson's methods with Spenser's, or even with Chaucer's. For example,

<sup>3</sup> In like manner, minute and unfamiliar, is the following ("Balin and Balan"):—"As light a flush, As hardly tints the blossom of the quince." Now and then we have to bring against Tennyson this charge of unfamiliarity, which may lessen the value of an illustration. But considering his range, it is not to be wondered at. In this connection we may note the very large number of new trees he has introduced.

<sup>4</sup> The poet had once written (in "The Miller's Daughter" of 1833) "The rummy chestnut buds." To be scientific may be easy; to be scientific and poetical is very hard. On this rare occasion the observing eye forgot to be poetical.

where Spenser (*Faery Queene*, I. i. 8. 9) enlarges on Chaucer, we have a most unlovely catalogue of trees that ends with this grotesque line:—

The carver holme; the maple seeldom inward sound.

Mere photographs would have served us much better.

Or, if one line is not a fair test, we may quote the line preceding:—

The fruitfull olive; and the platane round;

indeed, we may take the whole of the twenty trees enumerated, and we shall find that hardly one has a touch of nature about it, except the maple, and that was spoilt in the touching. In short, Spenser writes with his eye not on nature but on books<sup>2</sup>; and if space allowed we might go through the whole list and label each tree "Chaucer," "Ovid," and so forth. There is more first-hand nature-work in Chaucer, as may be discovered by a glance at his trees—or better, his long list of birds—in *The Parlement of Foules*.

But to return to our random recollections in Tennyson. We have read of the yew-tree that changes not in any gale,<sup>3</sup> and of the yew-tree with its fruitful cloud and living smoke.<sup>4</sup> And this leads us to reflect that although the poet began his original studies of nature at an early age, he did not at once break away from convention; in the first of these examples we have the yew-tree of all preceding literature, except Wordsworth, in whom its pining umbrage is tinged perennially; it is the yew-tree of Ovid for instance: "*Est via declivis funesta nubila taxo.*" I am aware of other explanations, but I believe the one given above is not unwarrantable<sup>5</sup>; and we often notice

<sup>2</sup> Spenser, of course, does on occasion give us direct transcripts from nature.

<sup>3</sup> "In Memoriam," ii.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., xxxix.

<sup>5</sup> Twice again after this discovery of the greening and blossoming of the yew, the poet emphasised his new description: "I have seen this yew-tree smoke," "puff'd the swaying branches into smoke." Surely it is by no means to his discredit if he had

a similar respect of convention, especially the classical, in the early nature work of Shakespeare.

Next we have fresh and fragrant memories of "broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime," and of fields "where all about the large lime feathers low"—"the lime a summer home of murmurous wings"; and there flashes before our mental vision what is perhaps the most brilliant line in all poetry—

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime.

Now we will turn to a tree that has little to recommend it to the poet, but it gains a grace from Tennyson—

thou, with all thy breadth and height  
Of foliage, towering sycamore.

Again, we have "the broad leaves of the sycamore," "The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores." Another tree that is common to poets—and indeed was in some danger of becoming too common—is the laurel; but what poet before Tennyson had ever listened to "the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk," or had seen "the twinkling laurel scatter silver lights"? Surely these two lines alone are the revelation of a power and a beauty in poetry that had been undreamed of by all the slumbering centuries; it is absolutely impossible to exaggerate when speaking on this subject. But we have not yet done with the laurel; even the poet's more conventional references are graceful and fresh—

On thy Parnassus set thy feet,  
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
About the ledges of the hill.

So, again, the porch of Ida's

something to learn. In early days he even wrote "The may upon the blackthorn." The aloe-tree or blackthorn blossoms earlier than the may or hawthorn (or whitethorn). The reading occurred in the "May Queen" of 1833, and in 1842 appeared corrected as "the blossom on the blackthorn." I may add that the "perpetual pine" of "The Progress of Spring" may be akin to the unchanging yew. But there is no room in this article for the total evidence that might be adduced in regard to this question of yew or hawthorn or blackthorn; and the same is true of the plumelets and the coco we shall meet with later.

palace sang all round with laurel.<sup>9</sup>

But, as might be expected, it is the national tree of England, the oak, "thick-leaved, ambrosial," that has been most abundantly glorified by Tennyson's verse; and with admirable design, no doubt, he puts this sturdy speech into the mouth of the most famous of English foresters:—

Sit here by me, where the most beaten track

Runs thro' the forest, hundreds of huge oaks,

Gnarl'd—older than the thrones of Europe—look,

What breadth, height, strength—torrents of eddying bark . . .

Pillaring a leaf-sky on their monstrous boles,

Sound at the core as we are.

As to Tennyson's poem *The Oak*, the thing described and the describing verse may almost be said to have grown incorporate into one being. Of *The Talking Oak*, a poem better known, I need say nothing here beyond calling attention to its happy blending of scientific fact with poetic fiction; but I must point to one or two exquisite bits of painting in other poems; this in *The Golden Year*:—

like an oaken stock in winter woods,  
O'erflourish'd<sup>10</sup> with the hoary clematis;  
or Merlin's oak—

so hollow, huge, and old,  
It look'd a tower of ruin'd mason  
work;

or this in *Aylmer's Field*—

Once grove-like, each huge arm a tree,  
but now

The broken base of a black tower, a  
cave

Of touchwood, with a single flourishing  
spray.

But the poet's talent for detailed and life-like description is by no means confined to the oak, as this passage may testify—

monstrous ivy-stems

Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred  
arms,

And suck'd the joining of the stones,  
and look'd,

A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a  
grove.

And the following stanza is almost  
equally elaborate:—

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and  
lean

Upon the dusky brushwood under-  
neath

Their broad curved branches, fledged  
with clearest green,

New from its silken sheath.

This common and perhaps unattractive English tree—at least the poets had little to say in its favor, unless it were the elm with foreign attributes, a tree of effete traditions, a "vine-prop" or "vine-claspt" or "ivy-circled"—receives splendid but late poetical justice from the genius of Tennyson in such lines as these—

The moan of doves in immemorial  
elms,

And murmuring of innumerable bees;  
and no earlier poet had the eye to see  
or the soul to sing like this:—

Our elm-tree's ruddy-hearted blossom-  
flake

Is fluttering down;

in fact, his most random references  
are worth quoting:—

The building rook'll caw from the  
windy tall elm-tree,

and elsewhere he speaks of "yon arch-  
ing avenue of old elms," and of the  
breeze that—

gathering freshlier overhead,  
Rock'd the full-follaged elms.

But I may not add to these examples, for another English tree, "the ash for nothing ill," as Spenser prosily, if quaintly, allows, has enriched the verse of Tennyson in a most striking manner:—

By ashen<sup>11</sup> roots the violets blow;

<sup>9</sup> I.e. was suggestive of song, learning, the Muses.

<sup>10</sup> Probably suggested (in error) by Shakespeare's "Empty trunks, o'erflourished by the devil" (*"Twelfth Night,"* II. iv. 404).

<sup>11</sup> Ashen, perhaps the archaic word meaning "of ash-trees"; but we may also compare the ashen-gray of Maud.

these are possibly the trees so well described in another section of *In Memoriam*:—

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw  
That hears the latest linnet trill.

But more noticeable are the two following passages:—

Delaying as the tender ash delays  
To clothe herself, when all the woods  
are green;

that hair  
More black than asbuds in the front  
of March.

This recalls the former comparison of a lady's hair to the chestnut; to which may be added:—

a skin  
As clean and white as privet when it  
flowers;

or the description of Vivien's robe of samite—

In color like the satin-shining palm  
On sallows in the windy gleams of  
March.

Here again we have marvels of poetic observation that put to shame nine-tenths of Tennyson's predecessors.

And no less will be our opinion if we wander at will through this delightful woodland of the poet—taking note of many a miracle of what is new and beautiful, of rosy plumelets<sup>12</sup> that tuft the larch in springtime, a time when the sloe is whitening, while the wood stands in a mist of green, or when the budding peaks (the undergrowth comes later into leaf)<sup>13</sup> are caught and cuffed by the gale; and even in the spring a salt wind "may burn the early blossoming trees"<sup>14</sup> that lean full east.<sup>15</sup>

Or in the sultry June weather we may stand "in the green gleam of dewy-tasselled trees," and hear the "whisper of the innumerable leaf"—

<sup>12</sup> Either the young cones or very possibly the young "tufts" of the tree itself, or perhaps both.

<sup>13</sup> "The topmost elm-tree gathered green" ("Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere"); also, "the topmost tree, that shoots New buds to heaven" ("The Foresters").

<sup>14</sup> About ten years ago, in the month of May, the foliage in the west of England was burnt by such wind (from the sea) for several miles inland.

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the poplar leaves with their "noise of falling showers." Here also in the poet's woodland we may watch all the sad beauty of the waning year, of the early Autumn laying here and there a fiery finger on the leaves, till later we shall have the flower-like fruit of the spindle-tree and the mock sunshine of the faded woods, and the maple will burn itself away; and then the October blast will blow the poplar white," and "the flying gold of the ruined woodland" will drive through the air. And lastly, in Winter, we shall see black holly, and the white-flowered wayfaring tree, and listen where the wood "grides and clangs its leafless ribs and iron horns," or where we may trace on paler heavens the branching symmetry of naked lime and leafless elm.

Or again, through all the seasons of the year we may walk within the poet's garden, first when the Heavenly Power is making all things new, and when the sunlit almond blossom shakes, and the blanching apricot spreads like snow in snow, and the snowflakes are fused to little spicy baths in the tender blushes of the peach, or lose themselves and die on the new life that *gems*<sup>16</sup> the hawthorn. Then April brings laburnums, dropping-wells of fire, and purple beeches will stand among the green; May comes, and the slender acacia will not

<sup>15</sup> At Clevedon, in Somerset, many trees are bare of both leaves and branches on their westward side, and they "lean full east"; this is owing to the prevailing wind from the sea. See "an old dwarf-elm That turns its back on the salt blast" ("Pelleas and Ettarre").

<sup>16</sup> By exposing to view the light under surface of the leaves. Thus "the illex whiten," in one of the poet's letters—and, as we all remember, the "willows whiten" in the "Lady of Shalott"; and we may compare "uplands hoary to the wind," and the silver-green poplar of "Mariana."

<sup>17</sup> Cf. the Latin *gemmae*. *Gems*, i.e. covers with buds; buds of the leaf, rather than of the blossom; though Milton writes ("Paradise Lost," vii. 325) "gemmed their blossoms"; here, however, gemmed may bear two interpretations. As to the use of the word in Tennyson, the poet possibly had in mind Virgil's—*Jam leto turgent in palme gemmae*. We may also compare—"a coppice gemm'd with green and red" ("Marriage of Geraint"); and for a different expression of the same thought we may add (from "In Memoriam"), "Now bourgeons every maze of quick."



shake one long milk bloom, and the witch-elms will fleck the green-sward; and we follow garden paths through trimly pruned lilac ambush till we discern the broad-leaved platans of the vale; here the wind blows softly over tremulous aspen-trees, and meadowy holms and alders, garden-isles. There, too, in the poet's garden we may rest from the heat of summer where cedars spread dark-green layers of shade; or we may drink cool air as we pace the plaited linden alleys; and in the later year we shall find his garden pleasant to the eye, for the giant ilex will keep its leaf though the frosts are keen, and the yucca which no winter can quell will push toward the sun a "spike of half-accomplished bells."

How many of these are novel and picturesque phrases that defy all my attempts at prose, and even rival the painter. For example, the poet has observed that at nightfall *the trees* first become indistinguishable in the gathering darkness; and no pigment on canvas could possibly represent this gradual approach of evening; yet any one of the following quotations gives us the perfect picture:—

A fire-balloon

Rose gem-like up before the  *dusky groves*,

And dropt a fairy parachute, and past;  
or this—to the nightingale:—

fierce extremes employ

Thy spirits in the *darkening* leaf.

In the earlier version of this passage "the *darkening* leaf" appears as "the *duking* leaf"—the epithet of the former quotation; the poet chooses to produce the same effect by a different medium. But the most elaborate of these pictures is the following:—

And twilight gloom'd; and broader-grown, the bowers

Drew the great night into themselves,  
and Heaven,

Star after star, arose and fell.

In this example, with the touch

"broader-grown" the poet again outdoes the painter by representing another effect of darkness—that of making objects appear larger.

I have yet to notice that, as in the case of birds, so in this of trees, the poet will take us to lands that he has not travelled, to the wealth of tropic bower and brake, the summer-winters by the palm and orange grove and mangrove copse, and "the slender coco's drooping crown of plumes."<sup>18</sup>

Although my illustrations must end here, it will be readily understood that I have by no means exhausted the poet's delightful allusions to this one species of vegetable life; and the same was true of my study of the birds mentioned in his poems; but I may have said enough to direct attention to some half-hidden treasures of our literature and to show that in Tennyson we may learn more about trees than some of us have imagined. This also, I think, will be allowed in regard to birds; and of course the mere facts are in every instance transfigured by exquisite poetry.

And so we might proceed along other ways and walks of the natural world, animate or inanimate, and hundreds of them; the result would be the same, whether we paused to examine more closely the little speed-well's darling blue, or the yellow-banded bee in blossom dust, or the silvery gossamers that twinkle into green and gold, or the shapes that haunt the dusk, or the sea-shell with its delicate spire and whorl, and its tiny habitant in rainbow frill, or the sea itself, that sapphire-spangled marriage-ring of our land. In short, there is scarce a familiar object of nature that Tennyson has not adorned, and

<sup>18</sup> This reminds us of Southey's ("Curse of Kehama"), "Reclined beneath a cocoa's feathery shade"; and in his description of other tropic scenery ("The Progress of Spring") Tennyson writes of "some dark dweller by the coco-palm." (Sir Norman Lockyer explains Tennyson's "coco" as a "tropical bird").

there are thousands that he has brought into view; indeed, we might quote from his own *Princess*:—

something of the frame, the rock,  
The star, the bird, the fish, the shell,  
the flower,  
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,  
The British Review.

And whatsoever can be taught and known;

for in every department of modern knowledge he has made beauty the handmaid of fact or truth as no other poet has done, or, I think, is ever likely to do.

Morton Luce.

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## THE POEMS OF RALPH HODGSON.

Among the ventures of peace which have as yet survived the strain of the war is a little shop in the unpropitious neighborhood of Theobalds-row. It is a shop that depends solely for its existence on the sale of poetry. It is not a charitable institution. Like any other London bookshop, it is supported by more or less involuntary contributions. The candid neutral has not yet taken it for a text in his revelations of our national decadence, though to come from a Germany furiously chanting Hymns of Hate to an England accepting all in good part rhymes of *Kultur* and vulture and Kaiser and wiser, it might appear to be a luxury to be classed with ostrich feathers and turtle soup. The truth is that in these dark and anxious days we realize as we may never have realized before that poetry is not a luxury but a necessity. For many it has proved a true encouragement and consolation. The unrelaxed strain (of reading) of the horrors of war gradually closes in the mind and curtains its windows. Like any personal and circumstantial danger or difficulty, it may become an obsession. And every obsession imperils true sanity and restricts freedom of action. Patriotism itself cannot live and flourish in any air but that of the imagination. The best things of life, all that is generous and beautiful, and unearthly and enduring, are things of peace. This war is a fight to the death for their preservation, for

their recovery. And poetry keeps them in remembrance. It is itself the naked impulsive expression of them. And the battle for them against the hosts of darkness is one that never ceases. Sidney, Raleigh, Lovelace were English soldiers, fighting men. But so too were Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats; so too, against ghostlier odds, were Vaughan and Francis Thompson. Knight of the Holy Ghost, Heine called himself; and every poet, small and great, in so far as he is true to the truth that is in him, is in some measure of that chivalry. Less and less poetry will perhaps be written for the present; that fact is easy to understand. But according to the degree in which England remains loyal to her ideals, and of a high, inflexible, and bright-visioned courage, poetry will serve her need. That treasury is inexhaustible.

Poetry—certainly dramatic and lyric poetry—is itself a form of action. It is the outcome, the revelation, of those rare moments when life's every energy is concentrated upon a single issue. No true poem was ever written in cold blood or out of an empty heart. And as men in the heat of battle are so completely engrossed in the thing in hand that time seems to stand still and hardly any recoverable and exact impression is left upon the memory—as any intense absorption, ecstasy itself, is a kind of unconsciousness and self-oblivion—so the greatest poetry has

probably been written. The phrase, poetry of action, is, of course, commonly used to describe any kind of verse that is merely descriptive of action. Much of it only differs from prose in the fact that it is metrical and canters and gallops along in a kind of flashing and dashing zest and high spirits. But there is a poetry in which the words themselves have almost the force and efficacy of deeds. They seem to have been fused into their places by the intensity of thought and feeling of which they are the expression. There is no violence, no over-emphasis, for these are symptoms of a dissipation of energy. The man in earnest never wastes. His speech is as clean and incisive as a blow. It is this forcefulness, this clean-cut inconsistency and onset that are the conspicuous marks of the poetry of Mr. Ralph Hodgson.

His "complete works" would go into a small volume. An early collection of verse was published some time ago. And a year or two before the war appeared a series of four little chapbooks, bound in mustard-colored and gray wrappers, with drawings by Mr. Lovat Fraser (price sixpence plain and two-and-sixpence colored), and privately published, so to speak, at the Sign of Flying Fame. These have lately been reissued from the Poetry Bookshop; and two of them, "The Bull" and "A Song of Honor," were "crowned" last year and won the Polignac Prize presented by the Academic Committee of the Royal Society of Literature. The Sign of Flying Fame now floats over an English camp, and if there is one thing clear in Mr. Hodgson's verse, it is his delight in "a pretty fighter." The phrase is purest English. "A Song of Honor" is

The Song of courage, heart and will  
And gladness in a fight,  
Of men who face a hopeless hill  
With sparkling and delight . . .

From men whose love of motherland  
Is like a dog's for one dear hand,  
Sole, selfless, boundless, blind.

It is a vehement, breathless hymn of praise to God and to "the Great Compassion" for a world of men who in the service of beauty, or love and wisdom, or of pity, or who in sheer stubborn resistance against circumstance, "at odds with fortune night and day," fight the good fight. We philosophize, we may sentimentalize, over a Nature red in tooth and claw, as though it were not of the very essence of life that every blade of grass should be green with joy and defiance and that some day it must be gray with the death that comes to all. There is no such philosophizing here, only a pity true and stoical for the thing beaten in a straight contest, a burning compassion for the thing destroyed in an unrighteous, material, and mercenary one, for any expense of spirit in a waste of shame, and an exultation in the clean prowess of either vanquished or victor. Think about it, analyze the problem as we will, we cannot escape from the fact that life is a conflict that has one inevitable end. Guns kill fast, but peace kills more inevitably; and while we regard physical death as anything in the nature of a defeat or a disaster, and not merely as an undressing, an "unbodying" and a getting of the tired home, we shall never free imagination from the entanglements of the mind.

That is the primary acceptance of this poetry. It does not argue, it does not dissect or explore or teach or attempt to criticize life, or to do anybody any particular good. Beauty is its impulse rather than its goal; truth the road it treads. And its effect is as downright and straightforward as that of a formidable nose in a vigorous face, the sparring attitude of a fearless young pugilist. Open as sunlight, as starshine, it has few

fine shades and little of what is generally meant by atmosphere. It states and asserts, loves and despises. It is concerned almost exclusively with things in themselves rather than with causes. It proclaims "I am," and therefore, with infinitely more zest and generosity than less ardent egoists can achieve, "Thou art," whether that "thou" be the leopard with her "flashing fingerhooks of steel," or the little hyssop in the wall, the dead singing birds hung up for sale in the shops of "Stupidity Street," or the worn-out, out-mastered "Bull," once, long ago, "full of baby wonderment," once lord and leader of a throng "of bulls and cows a thousand strong," now abandoned by the herd for carrion to the vultures.

Pity him, this dupe of dream,  
Leader of the herd again  
Only in his daft old brain,  
Once again the bull supreme,  
And bull enough to bear the part  
Only in his tameless heart.

Pity him that he must wake;  
Even now the swarm of flies  
Blackening his bloodshot eyes,  
Bursts and blusters from the lake,  
Scattered from the feast half-fed,  
By great shadows overhead.

And the dreamer turns away  
From his visionary herds  
And his splendid yesterday,  
Turns to meet the loathly birds  
Flocking round him from the skies,  
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

It is the poetry of a man in love with the natural innocence, the instinctive nature, of all creatures great and small, of a man perfectly, effortlessly happy with a world as fresh and lovely with life and light and "million-tinted" diversity as it was on the first of all Sundays, violently menacing and angry against tyranny and cowardly oppression, the lust of the strong against the weak. At times the old Adam in us all may cloud and defile

and destroy. At times "poor motherless Eve," "with a berry half-way to her lips," having listened a thought too long to the many-coiled cobra in the "Blasphemous Tree," the world grows gray. But "Babylon," resort of dreamers, is still a sure refuge. And though Time, the "old gipsy man," will not put up his caravan for a single hour, or loosen his reign for a single minute, the misty fluttering of the pretty goldfinch needs but an instant's glimpse to live for ever; and every spring from its olive chamber reawakens June's immortal nightingale.

"How fared you when you mortal were?"

What did you see on my peopled star?"

"Oh well enough," I answered her,

"It went for me where mortals are!

"I saw blue flowers and the merlin's flight

And the rime on the wintry tree,  
Blue doves I saw and summer light,

On the wings of the cinnamon bee."

Not, What did you *do*, but what did you *see*? Not on my beauteous, or my wayward, or my sin-stained star, but my "peopled." And this born lover of the people as a man replies to that most searching of all questions from the solitude of a poet.

This poetry then is hopelessly, exultantly unreasonable. Probably Mr. Hodgson never in his life used our blessed Mesopotamianisms, "significance," "utterance," "first cause," "environment," "higher criticism." There's not the remotest hint of them or of the conditions and chambers of the mind in which they are out at service in his verse:—

He came and took me by the hand

Up to a red rose tree,

He kept his meaning to Himself

But gave a rose to me.

I did not pray Him to lay bare  
The mystery to me,

Enough the rose was Heaven to smell  
And his own face to see.

There is nothing naïve in this, nor even childlike. It is the full and complete faith and gospel of a man active and imaginative rather than reflective. Of a man, too, who knows what "Ghoul Care" is and means, defies the sour fiend and all his "glooms and smuts" to do their worst, secure in the possession of three simple charms against any conceivable disaster—perfectly simple, and yet incommunicable—a lizard's eye, a drowsy bee, a goldfinch! But what are these curious and lovely things, which we blaspheme with the name of phenomena, but mysterious meeting-places, greetings, between ourselves and the all? When more than half the commerce between the living of this world is of fear, how can it be saved? Even to see beauty, to wake to wonder is an act of virtue as real as charity. Like charity itself it consists in being for the moment that which we love or pity, with which we share life. The nearest approach to the dogmatic in this poetry is naturally then an apophthegm, not of knowledge but of faith and grace—

God loves an idle rainbow,  
No less than laboring seas;

and it is followed by an argument from that realm of the visionary, whose logic is as inscrutable as it is final—

Reason has moons, but moons not hers  
Lie mirror'd on her sea,  
Confounding her astronomers,  
But O! delighting me.

None the less reason itself, and a wild long sweep of its wing, comes to the aid of this imagination when its very fortress is attacked. A long poem, not yet republished, appeared some years ago in the *Saturday Review* on what would seem the most arid of themes, the barbarous custom of wearing rare plumage in female headgear. And the prophetic threat with which it ended,

that the birds thus sacrificed to this blind folly will some day and at last leave humanity the prey to that they preyed upon, is repeated here in "Stupidity Street" and in "The Journeyman." They are indictments, blazing with indignation against the "Pimp of Fashion," "With all the angels mourning their dead loves Behind his bloody heels"—

It may be late when Nature cries  
Enough!

As one day cry she will,  
And man may have the wit to put her  
off

With shifts a season still;  
But man may find the pinch im-  
portunate

And fall to blaming men—  
Blind sires and breastless mothers of  
his fate,

It may be late and may be very late,  
Too late for blaming then.

Fundamental brainwork has long been acknowledged as essential to the writing of poetry; fundamental heart-work is as indispensable. A man is half dead who exists without either; a poet without them has not yet been born at all. What we each ask of poetry, what precise proportions of its necessary ingredients, is a personal question. Poetry, as such, is elemental. In all poetry we take what is given to us as it is given. And as regards Mr. Hodgson's there can be no half-heartedness. Nothing more "original" has been written of late years. And it depends for its originality on its pure singleness of spirit and purpose. There is little of the metaphorical, very little imagery, practically no allusiveness, nothing elaborate or literary. It is bare, vivid, wasteless—as near action as words can be. It serves life; it serves beauty. And its beauty and music is as much its own as its love and faith and courage are his that made it:—

The song of men all sorts and kinds,  
As many tempers, moods and minds



As leaves are on a tree,  
As many faiths and castes and creeds,  
As many human bloods and breeds  
As in the world may be;

The song of each and all who gaze  
On Beauty in her naked blaze,  
Or see her dimly in a haze,  
Or get her light in fitful rays  
And tiniest needles even,  
The song of all not wholly dark,  
Nor wholly sunk in stupor stark  
Too deep for groping Heaven—

And alleluias sweet and clear  
And wild with beauty men mishear  
From choirs of song as near and dear  
The Times.

To Paradise as they,  
The everlasting pipe and flute  
Of wind and sea and bird and brute,  
And lips deaf men imagine mute  
In wood and stone and clay.

The music of a lion strong  
That shakes a hill a whole night long,  
A hill as loud as he,  
The twitter of a mouse among  
Melodious greenery,  
The ruby's and the rainbow's song,  
The nightingale's—all three  
The song of life that wells and flows  
From every leopard, lark and rose  
And everything that gleams or goes  
Lack-lustre in the sea.

## THE STRANGE AFFAIR OF THE CHANCELLOR.

### CHAPTER I.

The nation was in for a shock—  
brief, but notable.

Hubert John Gurford, the Lord Chancellor, magnate of the Woolsack, was missing; had disappeared from the face of England as completely as if a heavenly and unseen chariot had descended and carried him away with it; or, more conceivably, according to some who hated him (and they were not a few, for in his time he had been a ruthless antagonist), it was as if the earth had opened and shut upon him in a single sudden second, settling him for all eternity in a climate as warm as his temper.

These were one or two ways of interpreting the mystery. But there was scope for other interpretations, as may be surmised from a report of the half-hour or so immediately preceding the "Good-night, my lord!" which Mr. Beamstock of the Cloudbury Arms Hotel breathed respectfully from his porch to his lordship, striding by with angry mien. The day was Saturday, the month September, and the time 6.45 P.M., with abundance of daylight at that hour. The Chancellor vouch-

safed neither word nor look in response; and, having watched the great man to the bend in the road, Mr. Beamstock re-entered his inn. Casually, yet valuably, he glanced at the clock just inside the doorway. It was exactly a quarter to seven.

No one had seen the Chancellor since; that is to say, no one was willing to confess to that effect.

Beyond the inn were but two houses in the next half-mile of road toward Chelcote, the nearest town to Cloudbury Hall, the Chancellor's Warwickshire seat, whence he had thus come forth for his vanishing. The one dwelling was an old cottage of stone and thatch inhabited by a deaf widow named Cheese and her son Samuel, the latter a harmless booby man known as Pegtop Sammy because of his persistent passion for pegtops in season and out of season. The other dwelling, about two hundred yards farther on, was Lilac House, a small red villa, tenanted by an elderly couple named Murphy, with whom lodged the Reverend George Leven, the Cloudbury curate.

No evidence of the Chancellor's

passing this Saturday evening was obtainable from either of these houses. Mrs. Cheese was in the village at the time, gossiping and what not with a hand to her bettermost ear; it was no use interrogating Sammy for any serious purpose; Mr. and Mrs. Murphy had not stirred from their back-parlor between six o'clock and eight; and George Leven, the curate, said that it was seven o'clock when he let himself into Lilac House with his latch-key. The curate remembered noticing a motor-car speeding for Chelcott when he reached the main road from the Hall by a public footpath through the park; but he certainly did not see the Chancellor. So he said on the Tuesday, when inquiries began to be made, and again on the Wednesday. It was only on the Wednesday that the probing into the mystery began to be as deep and official as Scotland Yard could make it.

Lady Geraldine Gurford, the Chancellor's motherless daughter, and mistress of Cloudbury, was not alarmed, scarcely even disturbed, when her father did not return to dinner on the Saturday. She and her learned father were both strong-minded persons, although at times impulsive and whimsical.

"We had a little disagreement, and I can imagine how he would feel about it. There were circumstances which would have made me do something erratic myself if I had been in his place. I should want to get away and think it over alone, and I quite supposed he had walked to Chelcott, scarcely meaning to, but going on and on until he found himself near the town. That would give him the idea of catching the eight-fifteen express to London. It would be such a relief to him! He often says that problems smooth out for him astonishingly in the train. I fully believed he had done that, and wrote to him at Half-Moon Street, on

Sunday, to hope he had not gone supperless to bed, and was—well, not so vexed as when he left me. I was not greatly surprised when I did not hear from him on Monday, but yesterday I began to get excited. Then I telegraphed to him twice, and a third time to Mrs. Cardigan, our London housekeeper. That is how the truth came out, inspector. People who do not know him as I do will think it an extraordinary occurrence anyway; and, although *I'm* not worrying, *I'm* glad now that Captain Rampney communicated with you folks in town. It was the thing to do, to satisfy the public."

Such was the Lady Geraldine's almost introductory speech to Inspector Clapton of Scotland Yard on the forenoon of Wednesday in the Hall library.

George Leven, the Cloudbury curate—tall, thin, handsome, pale, and apparently much more anxious than Lady Geraldine—was with her ladyship.

Captain Rampney, Chelcott's chief constable, having brought the inspector to Cloudbury, had returned to the village with a puffy chest and fierce eyes. The Lady Geraldine didn't want *him*, she said. "Too many cooks," you know, Captain Rampney; and I prefer to confide my private affairs to one clever mind instead of two. . . . You must forgive me," she said further, so graciously that the captain concealed his annoyance until he was in the Hall drive. He was, of course, astonished as well as annoyed. Astonished also was the Scotland Yard man himself, yet secretly gratified; and not unreasonably, under such treatment, both men jumped, yet not equally fast, to the startling and stormy assumption that the Chancellor's daughter had something up her sleeve about which, if she were not so masterful a young lady, it would have been well, on behalf of the nation, to challenge her forthwith. Captain Rampney made an uncomfortable but polite exit without

any such attempt to challenge. Hitherto, in the few minutes of his acquaintance with this lovely gray-eyed daughter of the highest legal personage in the land, Inspector Clapton had had no opening for anything of the kind.

The Lady Geraldine dashed headlong at the problem. She seemed to give the inspector credit for a superhuman amount of imagination—she took so much for granted, and was so calm, even almost smiling, about it. All she had said so far about the good-looking, but nervous and pale—yes, distinctly pale—young clergyman who stood by the hearth fingering an ivory paper-cutter, and, as it were, spell-bound by her in spite of his nervousness, was this: "I should like Mr. Leven to be present during our interview, inspector. He is interested in the case."

Interested! Powers above! then how about Chelcott's chief constable, who had been wallowing in the case since Tuesday morning, and was now dismissed with red ears?

For a few moments after the Lady Geraldine's narrative the inspector could only babble rather stupidly, and wipe his brow. "Really, my lady—will you allow me to sit down?" he asked, as if that might help him.

"Oh, do. How thoughtless of me!" exclaimed the Lady Geraldine. "Let's all sit." She signalled to the curate; herself took the Chancellor's own well-padded library throne, and, elbows on desk, looked straight at the inspector. "Ask me any questions that occur to you," she said. The curate, however, had not moved, and she addressed him persuasively: "Please don't stand, George. We've got to face it. Inspector Clapton is a sensible man; I could tell that in a moment by the shape of his forehead. He has got to know, dear, and the sooner the better." The inspector now stared as he seldom stared in the exercise of his call-

ing. The curate crimsoned; he did not budge, but dropped the paper-knife, and let it lie. His hands clasped each other convulsively and he trembled from head to foot as his gaze met the inspector's (which was hardening), and quickly transferred itself to the Lady Geraldine, who shook her head at him as at some fond but frail object. He seemed about to speak, but the Lady Geraldine spoke first.

"Leave it all to me, George.—And do hurry up, inspector!" she said. "You are quite sharp enough, I'm sure, to see how Mr. Leven and I stand toward each other. He thinks people will suppose he has murdered my father when the facts are generally known. At present no one knows about our relationship except you and my father himself."

"Is that so, my lady?" murmured the inspector solemnly.

"Yes, that is so," she replied.

The inspector drew a longish breath. "Am I to understand that Lord Gurford and Mr. Leven"—

But the Lady Geraldine interrupted him. "For goodness' sake don't look at Mr. Leven as if you wanted to handcuff him this very minute!"

"May I speak?" then entreated the Cloudbury curate, with wild eyes upon the Lady Geraldine.

"No, you may not, dear," she answered. "You'll only make a fool of yourself. Leave everything to me and Mr. Clapton.—Well, inspector, you were about to—understand something or other. What was it?"

In fair possession of his business faculties at last, the inspector put his query bluntly. "Was there a quarrel between this gentleman and Lord Gurford, my lady?"

"Yes, I suppose so. That's the point I want to get into *you* and no one else. Yet no; it takes two to quarrel—doesn't it?—and here it was all on one side.—Wasn't it, George?—But per-

haps I haven't told you enough, inspector. It was like this. My father came down from London unexpectedly on Saturday about six o'clock, and Mr. Leven happened to be at the Hall—we had had tea together, in fact—and on the spur of the moment I told my father of our engagement without giving him time to compose himself. I ought to have seen he was tired, and—well, he has some of the customary prejudices. You see what I mean?—I'm afraid too, George, that I didn't stop to think whether you would like it or not.—Anyway, it was a shock to my father, and he told Mr. Leven to leave the Hall, and never dare"—She stopped, shrugged her shoulders, and the inspector filled the gap.

"Set foot in it again, I presume?" he suggested automatically.

"Yes, more or less that. How brilliant of you, inspector!" The Lady Geraldine laughed faintly. "We're coming to the tiresome part now, as Mr. Leven thinks it."

"The *fatal* part!" commented the curate woefully.

"Rubbish, my dear George! Not to those who know you, as I do, and as I wish Inspector Clapton to.—He imagines that because he left the Hall at about half-past six, and didn't get to his lodgings until seven, people who know all about us are certain to declare he lay somewhere in wait for my father, and—— You grasp it? Did you *ever* hear anything so fantastic?"

The inspector nodded non-committally. He had had to do with criminals of all aspects, even the Cloudbury curate kind.

"You know my father by sight, I dare say?" continued the Lady Geraldine.

"Only by his portrait in public prints, my lady."

"That's near enough. You've some idea of him, then. He weighs about fourteen stone. I'll admit that he is

not tall; but would any sane man, even a constable, suppose that Mr. Leven could—oh, it's crazy nonsense!—and hide the body afterwards, if you please, all in that little half-hour?"

The inspector had known more unlikely deeds done, but nodded again. The case, the Lady Geraldine, and the curate were all gripping him well by this time—especially the Lady Geraldine. From a professional point of view he was most mightily struck by the cool—even amused—way in which this lovely young lady alluded to her father's bulk, dead or alive.

"Why, you wouldn't hurt a mouse of your own free-will, would you, George?" asked the Lady Geraldine cheerfully, in quick corollary.

That mouse question was not answered. It was scarcely put when a knock at the door ended the interview. A card was presented to the Lady Geraldine, who at first frowned, and said, "I'll see no more of these irrepressible young reporters," and then cried, "Splendid! Splendid! Splendid! Oh yes, Johnson, I'll see Mr. Lampson at once, when these gentlemen have gone. Wait in the hall till then."

Rising, the Lady Geraldine, with great ardor, explained Mr. Lampson to the inspector. "He's my father's solicitor—Lampson, Tomkins, Askew, & Brice—I dare say you know them—of Lincoln's Inn. I ought to have told you. He wired that he would be here by an early train. It's about offering a reward mainly. I should have liked to show you his letter of last night, inspector; but there's no time now.—You can tell him about it, George.—What I want you most particularly to do is to set Mr. Leven's mind at rest about himself. I suppose you will go over the ground again with Captain Rampney afterwards, though I don't see what's to be gained by that now. Anyhow, I do hope I've convinced you that just because of the—the *obvious*

ness of it all, Mr. Leven is the most improbable man in the world to— You see what I mean, I'm sure, and—and I think that must be all for the present."

She smiled the inspector toward the door, but intercepted the following curate, and, holding him by a button of his coat, said caressingly, "Why *didn't* you go away on Monday, George, as you had arranged? Then you would have been spared all this bother. And yet I don't know—perhaps it's for the best. But you are not to be so down-hearted. You simply *must* not be. It's so unwise, if nothing worse. Come and see me again soon, dear."

From the corridor ahead of them the inspector listened intently for George Leven's reply to these immense words, but heard none. With quickening pulses he led the way to the hall, took his hat, peered round for his companion, and aligned his descending footfalls on the porchsteps as nearly as possible with those of the curate. Passing the motor-car which had brought Mr. Lampson to the Hall from Chelcott, they faced the double avenue of tired-looking old limes and elms in a broad grass border, on either hand, about half a mile long. The inspector's lips tightened. The Lady Geraldine had made a jesting allusion to handcuffs. For the next ten minutes or so the Cloubury curate was sealed to him as surely as if they were attached by steel links. In that time he confidently hoped to turn him inside out as simply as a practised housewife skins a rabbit.

Preamble: a significant silence for fifteen or twenty paces. Then, "Well, Mr. Leven, this is a strange business. What were you to tell me about the letter of Lord Gurford's solicitor?"

The curate's hands were behind him, and his head was bowed. He was very pale again, and after a quick and

troubled glance at the inspector his gaze settled upon a parting in the avenue to the left, not far from the Hall door.

"Ah, yes," he sighed. "Mr. Lampson thinks Lord Gurford may have been abducted—kidnapped, in fact—and held for a ransom. It is, as you say, all very strange and terrible."

"Oh, come, sir, it's early to talk of 'terrible,'" said the inspector beguilingly. "Not a gentleman to be kidnapped without resistance, I should say, from her ladyship's account of him."

"Oh, it's fatuous, of course," assented the curate hopelessly. "And yet, do you know— But I can't talk about it—to a stranger. There's one thing, though, that I wish to ask you as a personal favor, Inspector Clapton; and I may say that I believe Lady Geraldine Gurford would have made the request herself if she had had time to remember it. It's about our engagement."

"Yes, sir?" prompted the inspector.

"I would so much prefer that no public mention of it was made. Really, it has nothing to do with the trouble, and yet"— The curate halted by that little side-track and smiled—for the first time in the detective's experience of him—a wan, desperate smile. "Inspector," he went on, in a changed tone, "I'll be perfectly frank with you. I was indiscreet last Saturday. Lady Geraldine wished to screen me when she said I had no part in the disagreement between her father and myself. He charged me with being a fortune-hunter. We were both hasty. I have Celtic blood in me. I lost control of myself. I said he should repent such an imputation. Worse still, I behaved audaciously, considering our relative positions in the world. But she is so wonderful—she diffuses courage and strength so amazingly—that I can account for it in no other way. On the Sunday she said I had shown just the



right kind of spirit; but it was not so. It was a wrong spirit; a *devil* possessed me. I felt so mad and furious that I could have struck him in his own house, great man though he was, and her father!"

"Was?" suggested the inspector casually.

"Was—is—what does it matter?" cried the curate, with a passionate gesture. He sobered as suddenly as he had boiled up. "All this is between ourselves, inspector, please; and I must leave you here. I generally go home this way, across the park. It cuts off a considerable corner. Well, you know the worst about me now, I am glad to say."

"Thank you, Mr. Leven," said the inspector dryly.

"You don't suspect me now, I hope?" asked the curate, with a simplicity the inspector had never seen matched in similar circumstances.

Seemingly the inspector was equally ingenuous as he smiled and replied, "It's much too soon to talk about suspecting any one, sir. As for suspecting *you*—a clergyman!" He held up his hands as if shocked. "By the way," he added, "something was said about your arranging to go away on Monday."

"Ah, yes." The curate welcomed the opening. "My holiday was due. I was going to Brighton for the inside of two weeks—the parson's fortnight, as it is termed. But I couldn't go after what had happened. Well, I mustn't keep you, now that I have said what I intended to say. Thanks so much, inspector. You have lifted a hideous weight off my mind, if only for the time. Good-bye."

Chambers's Journal.

He took a long step swayingly into the side-path.

The curate's reply had suggested to the inspector immediate other questions; but they were withheld. The inspector eyed the curate's receding back steadily, then continued his course down the avenue. He blew his nose loudly in a furlong or so, and then carried his head stiffly until he rejoined Captain Rampney—looking extremely cross, and smoking a cigar—in the porch of the inn. His mind's eye could already see the Cloudbury curate with a rope round his neck, or in penal servitude for life; also, himself burnished with glory, for the affair promised to be one of the *causes célèbres* of the young century. His mind's eye glimpsed something else, which led to breath-holding and ejaculations, internal only, and awesome. There was but one thoroughly accommodating key to the Lady Geraldine's remarkable behavior during his recent interview. She was an accessory to the murder—of course after the fact. Great Heaven, what a girl! An unnatural daughter, perhaps; but what a sweetheart, no matter whose daughter! The inspector had noticed that the sleeves of her delightful gray morning-gown (with scarlet ribbon-work) were close-fitting at the wrist, but wide above the elbow. There was room for much in them above the elbow. What an actress it seemed probable that she was! And what fine, unusual dust she had blown at him, while simultaneously releasing just enough of her sleeves' (that is to say, her heart's) treasure, as it were, to side-track him!

Charles Edwardes.

(To be continued.)

**WOMEN TO MEN.**

God bless you, lads!  
All women of the race,  
As forth you go,  
Wish you with steadfast face  
The best they know.

God cheer you, lads!  
Out in the bitter nights,  
Down the drear days,  
Through the red reeking fights  
And wasted ways.

God bring you, lads,  
Back to the motherland,  
True laurels gained,  
Glory in either hand,  
Honor unstained.

Women of Britain's race,  
As forth you go,  
Wish you with proud glad face  
The best they know:  
God bless you, lads!

Punch.

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**DESERTION IN FACE OF THE ENEMY.**

The resignation of Sir Edward Carson is a very significant incident. For months past we have heard of "divisions" within the Cabinet, but this first concrete instance of actual conflict tells us more than all the discreet and indiscreet revelations of lobby correspondents put together about the real difficulties which Mr. Asquith as head of a Coalition Government has had to face. We have not learned the precise nature of the difference which arose between Sir Edward Carson and the majority of his colleagues. All the public knows and all it is likely to know for some time to come—unless it is true, as some of Sir Edward Carson's friends allege, that he is about to "come out into the open" with a view

to forming an alternative Government—is that it was connected with the Government's policy in the Near East. But we need not trouble ourselves to inquire too closely into this problem; for the significance of the event lies not in the particular question at issue at all, but in the fact that the chief Law Officer of the Crown has resigned because he could not get his colleagues to accept his view on some point of military or foreign policy. That fact by itself indicates the existence of a spirit which, if it were widespread amongst political leaders, would make anything in the nature of Coalition Government impossible.

We were not amongst those who objected to Sir Edward Carson being in-

vited to join the reconstructed Cabinet. In the real union of political parties which we hoped for we did not see that it was possible to draw any lines. We had no reason to doubt Sir Edward Carson's patriotism and we had every reason to believe that he commanded in an extraordinary degree the confidence and loyalty of at least a small section of the nation. The Coalition Government was created to be a national Government in the fullest sense, representative of all sections; and even those of us who doubted the wisdom of the innovation recognized that if it would work there was a great deal to be said for it. The question was whether men of widely different views and temperaments would be able to collaborate and to achieve that unity of purpose which is the first condition of strong and efficient government at all times, but especially in war. It was obvious that a great deal of tact, discipline and self-restraint would be needed; that individual opinions and prejudices and even conscientious convictions would have to be sacrificed from time to time in subordination to the common end. It was—and is—perfectly evident that in such a Government the opportunities for dissension would be infinite, and that unless every member were prepared to ignore those opportunities, there would be weakness and disaster. Above all, it was necessary that there should be no attempt on the part of any individuals or groups within the Cabinet either to gain credit or to shirk responsibility for this or that part of the common policy. It is possible that on the issue on which Sir Edward Carson has left the Government he is right and the majority of his colleagues are wrong. It is even conceivable that as Dictator he would be more successful in the conduct of the war than any Cabinet, past, present or to come. But those are mere hy-

potheses. What is not a hypothesis but now, unfortunately, a demonstrated fact is that Sir Edward Carson has not the capacity for making those sacrifices of personal judgment and personal pride which the perilous national emergency demands. As the *Daily Mail* expressed it, "when it became apparent that his views were not shared by the Prime Minister he considered it his duty to himself to resign." And in resigning from the Coalition Cabinet he has shown that he ought never to have been a member of it.

The fact that Sir Edward Carson has retired unaccompanied by any of his late colleagues seems to justify a hope that the climax towards which political affairs have apparently been moving for some time has been reached and safely passed. A good many *ex cathedra* statements of doubtful value have been made lately in various quarters as to "the opinion of the country" on this question or that; but if there is one thing that is perfectly certain it is that the nation does not want another Ministerial crisis this side of the end of the war. It looks to its various political leaders to manage somehow or other to work together with a reasonable degree of give and take on both sides. The strong sectional passions and partisan-ships exhibited in a part of the London Press do not reflect or correspond to anything that exists amongst the general public throughout the country. It is our experience, and probably that of all our readers, that outside political circles in London there is not the slightest inclination to quarrel and bicker about the conduct of the war. There is a degree of dissatisfaction, of course, because the war after fifteen months is not yet within sight of being won; but there is nothing like panic to be found anywhere, nor any tendency—except, perhaps, in the single, and in our opinion rather unfair, case

of Mr. Churchill and the Dardanelles—to single out particular Ministers for censure. Still less is it possible to discover any desire for a substantial change of Government; and as for the idea of a General Election, ninety-nine men out of a hundred, without distinction of party, simply refuse to contemplate it.

The normal view—and it is the same view—is that the present Cabinet, with all its faults, contains all the practically available executive ability of the country. If there are blunders—well, there are blunders; it is very unfortunate, but it is no reason for jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire. Possibly Sir Edward Grey has blundered in his conduct of diplomatic negotiations in the Balkans. The average man probably believes he has. But that belief does not imply a conviction that Sir Edward Carson or Mr. Lloyd George would have managed the affair more firmly and tactfully. The public does not want Sir Edward Grey's resignation; it did not want Sir Edward Carson's, it does not believe that the Government can be strengthened by subtraction. If it did it would no doubt demand a single Dictator and would probably select Lord Kitchener for the post. But anyone who knows anything of the people of this country knows that they will never demand a Dictator, no matter what emergency may arise. There is for us no imaginable alternative to government by a Cabinet; and there is now no real alternative to government by the present Cabinet. It may have been a mistake to abandon party government, but it would be a disaster to return to it. Yet that is what any breaking up of Mr. Asquith's administration necessarily means. There might, and probably would, be individual defections, but inevitably the main cleavage would be on party lines.

The truth is, as we have already said, that the alarms and excursions of the London Press do not represent the national mind at all. Our misfortune is that they may be taken to represent it abroad. We have been going through a period of very great strain; a waiting period which has provided a more crucial test of our ability as a nation to maintain a great struggle than any of the perhaps more exciting and critical periods that are to come. And it may be that, apart from Ministers, who have to bear the first brunt of it, those who feel the strain most severely are those whose business it is, from day to day, to lead public opinion in the Press. That some of them should have broken down under it is not surprising. But it is important for it to be recognized that that is all that the present wave of violent language really means. It has no substance behind it. When the *Times* attacks Sir Edward Grey for a policy in the Balkans which it has always been foremost in advocating; when the *Daily Mail* denounces a War Minister whose appointment it had previously claimed as the rarest feather in its cap; when the *Morning Post*, after demanding for months that soldiers and sailors should be in full control of the war, suddenly suggests that supreme power should be placed in the hands of two lawyers; and when all three, with one or two minor prophets thrown in, demand the head of the Prime Minister because we are not yet in occupation of Constantinople or Berlin—well, they who run may read. The failure in the Dardanelles—as far as its latter stages are concerned a purely military failure for which two generals have already been superseded—the failure to perfect instantaneously the technique of defence against Zeppelins, the wild supposition that Sir Edward Grey wishes to establish "the freedom of the seas" in the German meaning

of that phrase—any stick is good enough wherewith to beat the Coalition Government. But all this indiscriminate seeking for scapegoats is nothing more than a well-recognized symptom of a certain unenviable state of mind. It means briefly that someone is "rattled." The accusations of incompetence flung here and there are not founded on evidence and considered judgment. Any striking success, like the forcing of the Dardanelles or a sudden forty-mile withdrawal of the Germans in France, would sweep them all away. It would be easy to find in history cases of similar symptoms appearing in similar circumstances in other countries, but some of us ventured to flatter ourselves before the war that they would never appear in England. Nor, in fact, have they appeared if by England we mean the nation and not the newspapers. The nation asks for no scapegoats. Mr. Asquith may be in danger of being transfixed by a fountain pen, but he is not in the slightest danger of being hung on a lamp-post.

Individual resignations from the Government.  
The New Statesman.

ernment must be regarded in the same light—as indicating, that is to say, not that things are seriously wrong in the management of the war, but that certain persons have temporarily lost their sense of proportion and their capacity for loyal co-operation. The members of the Coalition Government are, we know, inspired by a single and common aim. Over the best methods of achieving that aim there must be constant and strong differences of opinion. In such cases the view of the majority must, of necessity, prevail, and the minority, especially if it is small, is bound in duty and honor, by the terms of the trust which the nation has conferred upon the Cabinet as a whole, to accept that necessity and to promote whatever policy is jointly decided upon, as loyally as a subordinate officer accepts the plans of his superior, no matter how mistaken he may suppose them to be. To resign from this Government at a critical moment, as Sir Edward Carson has done, on a question of military policy is nothing more nor less than desertion in face of the enemy.

### WITH THE NORTH-EAST WIND.

A north-east haar had hung the city with a pall of gray. It gave an air of hardness to the stone-built houses, blending them with the stone-paved streets, till you could scarce see where the houses ended and the street began. A thin gray dust hung in the air. It colored everything, and people's faces all looked gray with the first touch of autumn cold. The wind, boisterous and gusty, whisked the soot-grimed city leaves about in the high suburb at the foot of a long range of hills, making one think it would be easy to have done with life on such an uncongenial day. Tramways were

packed with people of the working class, all of them of the alert, quick-witted type only to be seen in the great city on the Clyde, in all our Empire, and comparable alone to the dwellers in Chicago for dry vivacity.

By the air they wore of chastened pleasure, all those who knew them saw that they were intent upon a funeral. To serious minded men such as are they, for all their quickness, nothing is so soul-filling, for it is of the nature of a fact that no one can deny. A wedding has its possibilities, for it may lead to children, or divorce, but funerals are in another category. At



them the Scottish people is at its best, for never more than then does the deep underlying tenderness peep through the hardness of the rind. On foot and in the tramways, but most especially on foot, long lines of men and women, though fewer women, for the national prejudice that in years gone by thought it not decent for a wife to follow to the grave her husband's coffin, still holds a little in the north. Yet there was something in the crowd that showed it was to attend no common funeral, that they were "stepping west." No one wore black, except a minister or two, who looked a little like the belated rook you sometimes see amongst a flock of seagulls, in that vast ocean of gray tweed.

They tramped along, the whistling north-east wind pinching their features, making their eyes run, and as they went, almost unconsciously they fell into procession, for beyond the tramway line, a country lane that had not quite put on the graces of a street, though straggling houses were dotted here and there along it, received the crowd and marshalled it, as it were mechanically, without volition of its own. Kept in between the walls, and blocked in front by the hearse and long procession of the mourning coaches, the people slowly surged along. The greater portion of the crowd were townsmen, but there were miners washed and in their Sunday best, their faces showed the blue marks of healed-up scars into which coal dust or gunpowder had become tattooed, scars gained in the battle of their lives down in the pits, remembrances of falls of rocks or of occasions when the mine had "fired upon them."

Many had known Keir Hardie in his youth, had "wrocht wi' him" out-by, at Blantyre, at Hamilton, in Ayrshire, and all of them had heard him speak a hundred times. Even to those who

had not heard him, his name was as a household word. Miners predominated, but men of every trade were there. Many were members of that black-coated proletariat, whose narrow circumstances and daily struggle for appearances make their life harder to them, than is the life of any working man before he has had to dye his hair. Women tramped, too, for the dead leader had been a champion of their sex. They all respected him, loving him with that half-contemptuous gratitude that women often show to men who make the "woman question" the object of their lives.

After the Scottish fashion at a funeral, greetings were freely passed, and Reid, who hadna' seen his friend Mackinder since the time of the Mid-Lanark fight, greeted him with "Ye mind when first Keir Hardie was puttin' up for Parliament," and wrung his hand, hardened in the mine, with one as hardened, and instantly began to recall elections of the past.

"Ye mind yon Wishaw meeting?"

"Ay, ou aye; ye mean when a' they Irish wouldna' hear John Ferguson. Man, he almost grat after the meeting about it."

"Aye, but they gied Hardie himself a maist respectful hearing . . . aye, ou aye."

Others remembered him a boy, and others in his home at Cumnock, but all spoke of him with affection, holding him as something of their own, apart from other politicians, almost apart from men.

Old comrades who had been with him either at this election or that meeting, had helped or had intended to have helped at the crisis of his life, fought their old battles over, as they tramped along, all shivering in the wind.

The procession reached a long dip in the road, and the head of it, full half-a-mile away, could be seen group-

ing themselves beside the hearse, outside the chapel of the crematorium, whose ominous tall chimney, through which the ashes, and perchance the souls of thousands have escaped towards some empyrean or another, towered up starkly. At last all had arrived, and the small open space was crowded, the hearse and carriages appearing stuck amongst the people, like raisins in a cake, so thick they pressed upon them. The chapel, differing from the ordinary chapel of the faiths as much as does a motor driver from a cabman, had an air as of modernity about it, which contrasted strangely with the ordinary looking crowd, the adjacent hills, the decent mourning coaches and the black-coated undertakers who bore the coffin up the steps. Outside, the wind whistled and swayed the soot-stained trees about; but inside the chapel the heat was stifling.

When all was duly done, and long exordiums passed upon the man who in his life had been the target for the abuse of press and pulpit, the coffin slid away to its appointed place. One thought one heard the roaring of the flames, and somehow missed the familiar lowering of the body . . . earth to earth . . . to which the centuries of use and wont have made us all familiar, though dust to dust in this case was the more appropriate.

In either case, the book is closed for ever, and the familiar face is seen no more.

So standing just outside the chapel in the cold, waiting till all the usual greetings had been exchanged, I fell a musing on the man whom I had known so well. I saw him as he was thirty years ago, outlined against a bing or standing in a quarry in some mining village, and heard his once familiar address of "Men." He used no other in those days, to the immense disgust of legislators and other worthy but

unimaginative men whom he might chance to meet. About him seemed to stand a shadowy band, most of whom now are dead or lost to view, or have gone under in the fight.

John Ferguson was there, the old-time Irish leader, the friend of Davitt and of Butt. Tall and erect he stood, dressed in his long frock coat, his roll of papers in one hand, and with the other stuck into his breast, with all the air of being the last Roman left alive. Tom Mann, with his black hair, his flashing eyes, and his tumultuous speech peppered with expletives. Beside him, Sandy Haddow, of Parkhead, massive and Doric in his speech, with a gray woollen comforter rolled round his neck, and hands like panels of a door. Champion, pale, slight, and interesting, still the artillery officer, in spite of Socialism. John Burns, and Small, the miners' agent, with his close brown beard and taste for literature. Smillie stood near, he of the seven elections, and then checkweigher at a pit, either at Cadzow or Larkhall. There, too, was silver-tongued Shaw Maxwell and Chisholm Robertson, looking out darkly on the world through tinted spectacles; with him Bruce Glasier, girt with a red sash and with an aureole of fair, curly hair, around his head, half-poet and half-revolutionary.

They were all young and ardent, and as I mused upon them and their fate, and upon those of them who have gone down into the oblivion that waits for those who live before their time, I shivered in the wind.

Had he, too, lived in vain, he whose scant ashes were no doubt by this time all collected in an urn, and did they really represent all that remained of him?

Standing amongst the band of shadowy comrades I had known, I saw him, simple and yet with something of the prophet in his air, and some-

thing of the seer. Effective and yet ineffectual, something there was about him that attracted little children to him, and I should think lost dogs. He made mistakes, but then those who make no mistakes seldom make anything. His life was one long battle, so it seemed to me that it was fitting that at his funeral the north-east wind should howl amongst the trees, tossing and twisting them as he himself was twisted and storm-tossed in his tempestuous passage through the world.

As the crowd moved away, and in the hearse and mourning coaches, the spavined horses limped slowly down the road, a gleam of sunshine, such as

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had shone too little in his life, lighted up everything.

The swaying trees, and dark, gray houses of the ugly suburb of the town, were all transfigured for a moment. The chapel door was closed, and from the chimney of the crematorium a faint blue smoke was issuing, which, by degrees, faded into the atmosphere, just as the soul for all I know, may melt into the air.

When the last stragglers had gone, and bits of paper scurried uneasily along before the wind, the world seemed empty, with nothing friendly in it, but the shoulder of Ben Lomond peeping out shyly over the Kilpatrick Hills.

*R. B. Cunninghame Graham.*

## MERCY AND WAR.

It is satisfactory news that the American Ambassador in Berlin has made inquiries and written a report about the execution of Miss Cavell, the English nurse whose story has deeply moved every reader of the papers. The American action is no stronger proof of the emotions which have been aroused in the United States than we should have expected. We sincerely hope that the United States Government will press their inquiries further, and will be ready to show Germany, in the event of any similar episodes, that they are sensible of the enormous importance to the world of keeping military acts on a certain level of decency and chivalry. If the only Great Power outside the war does not do this, we know not where to look for a champion of humane custom. We say this without any ulterior or mischievous thought whatever of embroiling the United States with Germany. Without coming into the war—a course of action which we have never urged, and

never shall urge, on America—America could do much in trying to recall Germany to forgotten standards. No man can say when the time may not come for America herself to profit by principles of clemency in the conduct of affairs. But apart from that, we know enough of the American people to be sure that they will follow the steps of their Ambassador with the liveliest good wishes. Nothing will appeal to the American people more powerfully than what is in motive a mission of mercy.

It is worth while briefly to set down the known facts about Miss Cavell in order not to appear in our comments to be making use of unwarranted statements. She was the daughter of a Norfolk clergyman, and became a hospital nurse by profession some years ago. After a training in London, she was appointed in 1906 head of an institution in Brussels where nurses were trained in English methods. When Brussels was occupied

by the Germans she carried on her work as before. Probably she could have left Brussels in good time, but she preferred to continue a work which should be a passport to the consideration and esteem of all civilized men. On August 5th last she was arrested on the charge of having harbored fugitives and helped them to escape to England. She was tried, found guilty, and condemned to death. Her execution took place on October 13th. She does not seem to have quailed or to have repined for her fate at any period. But when she was brought into the yard where the firing party awaited her, this brave woman fell insensible before she had reached the wall against which she was to stand to be shot. A German officer, according to the narrative, then drew his revolver and shot her as she lay upon the ground. Such, apparently, are the facts, and we do not desire to exaggerate in writing about them. Possibly, according to German military law, the prescribed penalty for harboring fugitives is death, and therefore it is no doubt said in Germany that the exaction of the full penalty was necessary and thoroughly deserved. All that we can say, in the face of such opinions, is that, for all the law in the world, the hearts of civilized men—as we understand civilized men—shrink from killing a woman because she has indulged one of the first and most beautiful instincts of women, which is to succor those who throw themselves upon their mercy. A woman would scarcely be a woman who could easily resist the appeal of those who besought her of her pity to aid them in their extremity and distress. No doubt Miss Cavell, as a woman who held a public position in Brussels, and whose very profession was to tend and to cherish, would be one of the first persons to whom fugitives would turn. The

pressure on her feelings was, we venture to guess, enormous. Her generosity was regularly besieged. And in her womanly generosity and tenderness she committed her offence. Offence, of course, it was. But it was surely a venial offence, a likeable offence, an offence almost worthy of esteem in the heart of any humane and honorable enemy.

Admiration would have captured every British officer who sat on a Court-Martial to try a woman on such a charge. No doubt a British Court would have inflicted a penalty. It is always necessary to deter others from helping the enemies of one's country. If Miss Cavell had been charged with spying, we should not have written in protest against her execution. Spies are as often as not gallant and honorable people who serve their country at deadly risk and in inconspicuous ways. But the death penalty is necessary—at all events in the case of men. When German spies have been executed in England we think the prevalent feeling has been respect for the courage with which they performed their service and the calmness with which they met their end. Although German women have, we believe, been convicted of spying here, they have not, however, been executed. The fact is that, though martial law in all countries prescribes the death penalty for a variety of offences, civilized men practise an ample discretion in inflicting it. It is the mark of civilization to exercise this discretion. It is inconceivable that if Miss Cavell had been a German who had committed the same offence in England, she would have been executed. Not since the reign of James II., when Alice Lisle and Elizabeth Gaunt were executed on the charge of having harbored fugitives of Monmouth's army, has a woman been executed for such an offence in Britain. German law may be

very rigid in form, but is not too rigid to be tempered with mercy. One can think of a dozen ways—of which a direct appeal to the German Emperor is only one, but a sure one in an absolutist country—whereby Miss Cavell could have been saved. But mercy is just the quality which is absent from the German method. It is on these grounds, and not on any abstract legal principles, that we say the execution of Miss Cavell was a merciless act, an outrage, and a shame to decent men. As for the horrible incident of the German officer taking over the duty of the firing party and shooting Miss Cavell as she lay upon the ground, we cannot avoid the reflection that such a thing could not possibly have happened here. The revolver, one fancies, in the hand of a British officer would have refused to go off. A British officer simply could not have brought himself to shoot, as she lay fainting on the ground, a woman whose one offence was to receive and aid those in distress. The shots of a firing party are, and are intended to be, so to speak, anonymous shots. No one knows who has fired the fatal shot. But the German officer took upon himself that detestable responsibility. In all the ugly story that is perhaps the incident which most troubles the memory.

The Americans are people of proved generous sentiments, and they will applaud and support their representative if he points any further inquiries he may make by dwelling, not upon the law, which may well be on the side of the Germans, but upon the higher merits of merciful custom. Northerners acted on merciful impulses when they sheltered Southern slaves in spite of all the rigors of the Fugitive Slave Act. They can still thrill with the same shame which caused Whittier an agony of remorse when the fugitive slave, Anthony Burns, was given up

under the Act by the Boston Court in 1854. The slave was escorted to the ship which was to take him back to his owners by armed troops, and Whittier wrote:—

"And, as I thought of Liberty  
Marched handcuffed down that sworded  
street,  
The solid earth beneath my feet  
Reeled fluid as the sea.

All love of home, all pride of place,  
All generous confidence and trust,  
Sank smothering in that deep disgust  
And anguish of disgrace.

'Mother of Freedom, wise and brave,  
Rise awful in thy strength,' I said;  
Ah me! I spake but to the dead;  
I stood upon her grave!"

It was for indulging the passions of pity and tenderness—for doing just what Whittier condemned Boston for not doing—that Miss Cavell was executed. Again, the feelings of Americans are wholly with the act of Stonewall Jackson (also recorded in verse by Whittier) when he refused to let his men fire on old Barbara Frietich, who waved a Federal banner from her window in a town captured by the Southerners in the Civil War. A shot had already broken the staff of the flag when Jackson leaped before his men:—

"Who touches a hair of yon gray  
head  
Dies like a dog! March on!" he said."

We shall fight to the last remnant of our resources in money and men in order that a principle of government which is without mercy may not prevail to direct this world. We could not have a better illustration of what we oppose than the spirit which justifies the death of Miss Cavell. Admit to the extreme point of legal nicety that she did wrong, and one must still feel with the old Jacobite who, when told that he had lost his soul by swearing to a lie in declaring



that he harbored no fugitive, retorted: "I'd rather trust my soul to God than the laird to you bloody-minded men." Every man would have yearned to save Miss Cavell from a severe punishment for her acts of mercy if he himself had been capable of mercy. As Isabella says in *Measure for Measure*:—

"Well, believe this,  
No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,  
Not the King's crown, nor the deputed  
sword,  
The marshal's truncheon, nor the  
judge's robe,

The Spectator.

Become them with one half so good a  
grace  
As mercy does.

Why, all the souls that were, were forfeit once;  
And He that might the vantage best  
have took  
Found out the remedy. How would you be,  
If He, which is the top of judgment, should  
But judge you as you are? O, think on that;  
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,  
Like man new made."

### SEA POWER AGAIN.

Any new development of our command of the sea affords us satisfaction, apart from its practical bearing upon the combined operations of the world war. There is so ready a disposition to take the silent Navy for granted: to ignore the truth that the senior Service has made the greatest contribution to the Allied cause, and that from the first it has been the deciding factor on the side of victory. The land forces of the Entente have done superbly; they will gain more laurels before the struggle wears itself out, but they have done and will continue to do so to a running chorus of praise, the warmth of which albeit cannot be overdone. Nevertheless it may be said without a suggestion of disparagement that the soldier is always in the limelight, whereas the sleepless vigilance of the men at sea is only fully recognized when some spectacular display recalls the existence of the Fleet to the unimaginative. Such an episode has been the series of exploits by our submarines in the Baltic. This area of marine activities has been a stumbling-block since the beginning of the war, both to our

naval tacticians and to our statesmen. As long as the enemy retained the upper hand in the Baltic he could challenge our claim to supremacy on the waters; he could point to technical flaws in our assertions of the right to blockade his ports; and he had a source of supplies which our Government's tender solicitude for the feelings of neutrals kept open. If the full extent of the trade between Scandinavia and Germany could be made public there would be fine scope for the critics. On the other hand, the not inconsiderable Russian fleet in the Baltic has served the purpose of the Allies by keeping a superior proportion of Germany's naval strength always on the alert. Still, the benefits of having the command of the inland sea far outweighed this one disadvantage.

Our underwater craft have redressed the balance. By means of a few brilliant successes the invidious exception of the Baltic has been destroyed and the British Navy can make good its claim in full to the mastery of the seas. The celebration of Trafalgar Day gave Mr. Balfour and Mr. Churchill a fitting occasion to pay

tribute to this aspect of the world war. We will quote a passage from a message the latter sent to the Navy League, a message which cannot otherwise be regarded as a model of discretion: "The great strategic conclusions upon which our naval dispositions were based have been vindicated. From its shrouded throne amid the northern storms the Grand Fleet dominates and will finally decide the fate of warring nations, and by that formidable combination of strength and patience will secure the victory of our just cause." There is the simple truth dressed flamboyantly. Germany may protract the war, she may regain the upper hand with her land forces, but she cannot win the war because the British Navy condemns her to live upon her own substance, to exhaust her own vitality with ever-decreasing hope of outside replenishment. The least imaginative can realize what would have been the end if we had presented the enemy with the mobility of the seas: if we had stood aside and left our Allies open to attack at any chosen place. The position would have been reversed: France and Russia would have been beleaguered and cut off from intercourse with the outer world. The war would not have lasted the first year, Italy would have remained neutral and would have been made to feel the resentment of the conquerors, and the Prussian hegemony over Europe and the Near East would have become an accomplished fact. And ourselves? We should have accepted the Judas price and should be waiting, scorned and friendless, for the next blow of the autocrat.

These considerations raise the question as to whether we are even now making the most of our mastery of the seas. That mastery is not for the duration of the war. It will continue, with perhaps added emphasis, during the coming years of peace. And it is

The Outlook.

for the struggles inevitable in those years of peace that we should now be preparing. M. Sazonoff has called attention to the opportunity presented to the Allies by the isolation of the Central Empires. Writing to the Petrograd correspondent of the *Times* he said: "The fact that the British Navy has swept the German flag from the seas, and thereby rendered untold services to our joint military interests, has also perhaps lessened our collective concern for the protection of our trade from German competition. It is high time that we should think more of this question. The war must come to an end some time, and we should not delay in discussing commercial treaties between the Allies." This business-like view is directly opposed to the official opinion that such problems are out of place in a time of crisis. The Government may have its hands too full already, the capacity of Parliamentary Committees may be fully absorbed on other matters, and we trust it is so. This is no work for politicians: it requires the close attention of the best commercial brains of the three countries. If we are not resigned to years of pinched economy we must find the money to pay for the war by extended markets and growth of exports. If these ends must be reached at the expense of Germany, we are not responsible. Philanthropy begins at home, and we shall have to thank the enemy for the burden of debt we shall carry. No false sentiment should interfere with the conditions we shall be able to impose. Sea-power will be just as effective in protecting our peace interests as it has been in increasing the martial strength of the Entente. If we fail to use it, if we slip back into the old policy of muddle and drift, we shall deserve to suffer the years of pinch and poverty to which the ambitions of Potsdam will have condemned us.

## BOOKS AND THEIR MAKERS.

There is no disputing the fact that the reading market—we can hardly say the literary market—is flooded in this twentieth century. Every kind of book (to dismiss all consideration of the periodical press) finds its way there, apparently without distinction or limitation; as with travellers before the war, so now with writers, no passports or other credentials seem to be required.

We may, for the purpose of our argument, divide books into two classes: those that serve some definite purpose in life, such as education, sociology, theology, philosophy; and those that are written to interest, such as travel, memoirs, fiction. We can set aside from the first class such books as are purely technical and scientific, and from the second that species of writing which is called "*belles-lettres*." Technical writing and "*belles-lettres*" are practically impossible except for the trained expert or artist.

This leads us to another division, that of the writers; here we have on one side the professional or trained writer, on the other the amateur. Let us take, first of all, the "books with a purpose." These are obviously the province of the specialist, who has something definite and important to say: by reason of his education, training, practice in thought, and in lucid, convincing expression of that thought, he speaks with authority, and merits a respectful hearing without undue competition. In actual fact he, the professional, has to face a most unfair competition—that of the amateur who, on the strength of certain half-fledged opinions (more often fads or prejudices), by reason, perhaps, of social position or other means of notoriety, or even thanks to his purse,

which enables him to pay his own publishing bill, will thrust his crude volume into the hands of those who do not need it. How often do we see the veriest novices laying down the law on, say, the needs and ideals of the youthful mind, or the defects and obligations of every class in the community except perhaps their own! And what do their raucous and untrained voices effect except a general fatigue and distraction to the reader, who might, if undisturbed, glean some help and information from the quiet and reasoned speech of the expert? Incidentally they are robbing him of his due—not only of the hearing he deserves, but also of the return due to him for his labor. If reproached for that, they will probably say that he can look after himself; if told that their books are really not in the least useful or necessary, they will be indignant.

In the other class of book the busy amateur is less harmful—in the novel, for example; and this is fortunate, when we consider the mass of fiction poured out ceaselessly even to-day. It is significant, by the way, that fiction in France is at this moment completely at a discount, except for a book here and there by some eminent writer. Novels are not; the war, in France, has evidently burnt away even the desire for romantic illusion. In this country the novelist is still busy with his fiction, except when he is visiting the trenches or writing about Allied strategy or German psychology.

But the amateur novel does no more harm now than it has always done; in nine cases out of ten a few score copies are sold, and then its day is over. What we are concerned with is the novel by the professional, the "best seller."

In justice, it must be said that so far (of course the season has not yet reached its full swing) the "best sellers" are less conspicuous than usual. All the more reason then for anticipating their possible activity; for we have a foreboding that, as soon as the market is normal, we shall see the professional novelist at its gates, volume in hand. The specialist in what we have called useful books writes for the few, and writes well. The specialist in fiction usually writes for the many, and writes badly. We do not say that his books have any active influence for definite evil; literature of that kind is happily rare. The harm of the "best sellers" is that, for all their attractive appearance and the lavish advertisement that accompanies them, their contents are almost always cheap stuff, only one grade above the kind of penny novelette that is the usual mental food of the scullery-maid and the errand boy—sentiment in high circles, or impossible adventure. Now the penny novelette, romantic or adventurous, is, under present conditions, almost inevitable; girls whose whole energy is consumed by dreary, arduous toil, with but little respite or hope of improvement, find not merely rest, but also the romance that is denied to their drab lives, in the story of the wicked Earl and the virtuous dairymaid, or the beautiful Countess and the exemplary barber's assistant. The errand boy satisfies his youthful instinct for adventure with the deeds of the pirate-hunter or the champion detective, and, as long as his penny numbers do not lead him into dangerous temptation, there is but little harm done. What else could he read? Ruskin, Carlyle, or the golden thoughts of Samuel Smiles? The romance of the novelette comes and goes with leisure moments; the philosophy of those sterner prophets leads but to disillusion or distorted

views of life. Last of all, the penny novelette is despised except by those immediate patrons for whom it is specially designed, and who derive vast pleasure and but little harm from it as a rule.

The "best seller"—or, indeed, the silly novel in general—has a different appeal and to a different class—that vast middle-class which has grown up of late years. Half educated, half formed, despising all below itself, envious of all above it, in many ways it is so close to the fringe of "society" as to consider itself within that fringe—with one foot, so to speak. It reads the same novels as the "upper class." But the latter bring to the novelist's work a point of view which establishes better proportions; he has very little to tell them that they do not know by reason of their own experience or position; he may amuse or even impress them, but they can judge fairly of his accuracy. Besides this, they have many other interests; fiction is only a passing occupation for them.

For the suburb and the boarding-house the six-shilling novel is little less than a course of obfuscation, a standard of judgment in itself. More skilful, and therefore convincing, than the novelette, it is absorbed page by page; it forms the subject of serious conversation, even formal debate maybe; it satisfies the keen desire for portraiture of the unknown. But almost all the portraiture is false—not false in the sense of absolute lying, but false as the presentment of politics by the halfpenny daily, or "society" by a penny weekly. Needless to say, the "best seller," has this special demerit that it goes far to swamp the few really adequate novels which combine interest and attraction with realism.

As we have indicated, France just now has no time for novels of any

sort; but even at other times the French public do not suffer rubbish or illusion gladly. We do not see on Paris bookstalls those lurid appeals to stagnant appetites, or in French papers those glowing descriptions of inanities which prevail here.

But then England is different from France, different indeed from any other country in Europe—so much so that the thinker cannot but wonder at times where are the points of contact that generate friendship, or even enmity, between her and other countries.

Only in England is Government—the chief directing force of national life—left so largely to hazard, and the confusion of that hazard worse confounded by a greater mass, a bigger influx, of inexpert counsel than could be dreamt of elsewhere. So perhaps it is logical, if sad, that literature, the chief directing force of national thought, is also in England left so much to hazard—the hazard of the amateur who shovels out his futilities, and of the professional who shovels

*The Athenæum.*

out his mixture of dope and shock, secure of gathering in the shekels, and feeding his public the while with just the kind of rubbish that will soothe and deceive. As for the expert and the artist, each has his ideal clear before him, his education and long laborious training behind him, these are left to struggle as best they can to make their voices heard—the only voices that should count, whether for the select or for the multitude—amid that Babel of confusion which, according to the pretence of the few whose interest it is to keep shouting, is hailed as the “thought of the nation.”

It is a commonplace that the war is waking us up. Will it wake us up, and leave us all so awakened that we shall listen, both now and when it is over, to the voices of those few who really know what they wish to say in whatever branch of life? If that comes to pass, and our national life takes to itself order and real progress, then we may hope that literature also will come into its own.

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## BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

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“Aladore,” by Henry Newbolt, is an unusual and beautiful production of rare literary charm. Told in the manner of old Arthurian romances, yet with a subtle modern allegory, it is not a book to read in an evening or in a day. There is a leisure, a grace, a delicacy in the telling of the story which make it something to be read slowly and pondered over. The hero is a knight who puts aside his inherited power and riches and goes on a quest to find the thing most worth while. Aside from its allegorical significance the story has originality and freshness and the allegory itself is one of great beauty. To render the

book more perfect, the illustrations in colotype from drawings by Lady Hylton are exquisite. They fit the mood and conception of the tale as Blake's drawings completed his poetry. In this day when so many writers are feverishly engaged in striving to supply the public with what it is supposed to want, the publication of a book like this is a literary event. E. P. Dutton & Co.

“The Hope of the House,” is a present day romance by Agnes and Eger-ton Castle. David Owen, of Treowen, a Welsh estate, finds himself fatherless at the beginning of his manhood



and guardian to John, his brother, his junior by several years. David discovers that he cannot make the estate yield enough to educate his brother at Eton and Oxford unless he becomes not a gentleman-farmer but an actual farmer. So he devotes the best years of his life to building up the estate that it may become a fitting heritage for the family John will found. John is brilliant, appreciative, and devoted to David. He becomes betrothed and for a time it seems as if David's dreams would come true. The outbreak of the great war, however, cuts off John's life and David's hopes. The reblooming and fulfilment of those hopes is brought about by a lovely Belgian princess and refugee, a romantic and fascinating character. In setting, characters, and plot the story is singularly happy. D. Appleton & Co.

"Around Old Chester" by Margaret Deland (Harper & Bros.) groups together seven charming stories of the old Chester type—simple, natural and beguiling—with which Mrs. Deland has made her readers familiar. Dr. Lavendar reappears in them—what would an old Chester story be without him?—and so does Dr. Willy King, the two often combining to heal physical and spiritual ills. There are other characters not a few, of the tragedy or the comedy of whose lives the reader is given glimpses—"G.G.," whose shy advances toward the other sex are grievously misunderstood; the Halseys, whose life is one long tragedy of hate and fear; Roberts, the old Irvingite, who listens all his life for a voice from the unseen, and John Fenn, the staunch Presbyterian, who finds himself to his great surprise the central figure in a romance; Captain Price, who, disappointed in his early love, reverts unexpectedly to it in his old age; Peter Walton, whose life is in three "volumes," the last the most

disturbing; these and the other characters, major and minor, who move through these seven stories, are skillfully drawn and true to life. Incidentally, the reader who notices the dedication and looks up Mrs. Deland's name in "Who's Who" may be able to locate old Chester definitely on the map.

"The Log of a Noncombatant," is written by Horace Green, Staff Correspondent of the New York Evening Post, and Special Correspondent of the Boston Journal. It relates the author's experiences within the Belgian lines, within the German lines, and in Holland, covering a period from the outbreak of the war until some time in October 1914. The sketches are personal, breezy, and intensely interesting. The author was present at the siege and fall of Antwerp, and his account of those fateful days is unforgettable. More significant, however, than the record of events is Mr. Green's attitude of mind toward Germans and Allies alike. From close personal observation and sifting of evidence he seeks to correct some of the impressions made by reports of German atrocities. Knowing that the reality is horrible enough without exaggeration, he endeavors to separate truth from fable with the result that the facts which he presents gain in force by reason of his fairness. Houghton Mifflin Co.

As vivid as the pages of Carlyle, but free from the mannerisms and excursions which marred the writing of that great historian, Hilaire Belloc's "High Lights of the French Revolution" (The Century Co) presents the central events of that swiftly-moving drama with astonishing force and clearness. In six chapters or essays, linked together by brief Introductions, he depicts the hesitating King and the re-

bellious Commons, the royal flight to Varennes, the storming of the Tuilleries, the repulse of the Prussian attack at Valmy, the execution of the King, and the fall of the Monarchy. Readers who profess to find history dull will be relieved of that illusion if they will but open the pages of this book. Its separate chapters are like the acts of a great play upon the stage; the personages who move through it are alive and real; and the impression upon the reader is much as if he were actually witnessing the scenes described. The charm of the book is enhanced by fifty or more full-page illustrations from paintings and engravings of the period.

"Young Hilda at the Wars" by Arthur Gleason is a story which is in part fiction, but mostly a narrative of real experiences in the midst of the horrors through which Belgium has been passing during the last sixteen months. It is an American girl—a girl from Iowa—who gives the book its title; and it is of her work and that of two English women, a couple of surgeons and a Red Cross ambulance at the fighting line, and in villages shattered by shells, that the story is told. A touching story it is, yet told simply and without exaggeration. Mr. Gleason, who writes it, spent weeks of ambulance service, with his wife, in the midst of the scenes which he describes; and, with a few unimportant exceptions, every incident in the story is drawn from their experience. It may be read in a couple of hours; but the impression which it makes of courage, devotion and sacrifice in face of the deadliest perils will linger long in the mind. Frederick A. Stokes Co.

Maxim Gorky's "My Childhood" (The Century Co.) is an astonishingly graphic and ingenuous bit of autobiography. The author, whose pen

name is familiar to all lovers of Russian literature, is Alexei Maximovich Pyeshkov. He was the son of a dyer, and, becoming an orphan in his childhood, was left to the upbringing of his grandfather and grandmother, the one a past master of cruelty, the other loving and benignant. He lived the life and experienced the hardships of a Russian peasant; and his recollections of his childhood are so vivid and his narrative of them is so full of feeling that the book may be accepted as a portrayal of Russian life even more illuminating than that to be found in the long list of tales of which he is the author. Opening with the death of his father, and closing with the death of his mother and his own summary expulsion from his grandfather's house, the story is a dreary one but of absorbing interest.

The prime purpose of Clifton Johnson's "Highways and Byways of New England"—the seventh and concluding volume of a series which aims to assist Americans in carrying out the praiseworthy purpose to "see America first"—is to guide tourists and automobilists to the most picturesque and interesting places in the six New England states, to show them what they ought to see and why. This purpose it serves extremely well; but beyond this, it has a flavor of its own which makes it delightful reading. Mr. Johnson has a rare gift for getting the most intimate views of things. He knows history, but he doesn't bore the reader with too much of it. He has a keen appreciation of natural beauty and knows how to describe it without affectation. What is perhaps most important he knows people, and is able to discern whatever in them is most characteristic and vital, and to make his readers understand it. Therefore this book is worth reading, even by people who do but little travelling. Mr. Johnson has

the good fortune also to be his own artist, and the forty or fifty illustrations which decorate this book, from "The fish story," which forms the frontispiece to the glimpse of "One of the old folks at home," in the last chapter are all his work, and they also, like the text, are full of flavor. To each chapter are appended tourist and automobile route notes. The Macmillan Co.

Professor Morris Jastrow of the University of Pennsylvania, who has devoted the best years of his life to the study of Semitic religions, languages and literature, and has already published several volumes embodying the fruits of his studies, is the author of a massive and comprehensive history of "The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria," which the J. B. Lippincott Co. publish in an attractive and richly illustrated volume. It was not until about the middle of the last century that material for the study of Babylonian history became available through the excavation of ancient cities and monuments. It was some years later before the key to the reading of cuneiform inscriptions was discovered, and it became possible to spell out the caprices of kings and the changes of dynasties which were written on monuments and tablets; and it was not until the beginning of the present century that the obelisk was found on which was inscribed the famous Code of Hammurapi, in which, more than 2,000 years before Christ, was written down the law, in minutest detail, which was to govern all the relations and interests—commercial, industrial and moral—of the Babylonian people to the end of time. Professor Jastrow's theme, therefore, while it takes him back to the very dawn of civilization, is surprisingly fresh in the sources of its data; and if some of its chapters—notably that on Cuneiform

Decipherment—are a little difficult of comprehension by the average reader, the fault lies, not with the author, but with the essential complexity of the subject. Of absorbing interest to all readers are the chapters describing the excavations and explorations which disclosed the material for Babylonian history; the fruits of the study of that history; the Babylonian religion, cults and temples; the provisions of the Code of Hammurapi; and—most of all perhaps—the specimens of Babylonian literature, including even personal and business letters, deciphered from the ancient tablets. A map and 200 illustrations further interpret the subject.

Readers of Dr. George Frederick Kunz's work on "The Curious Lore of Precious Stones," published several years ago, may well have thought that it completely traversed the chosen field of research, and left little to be added; but they will find in his later, companion volume, "The Magic of Jewels and Charms" (J. B. Lippincott Co.), a wealth of new information, gleaned from many sources and opening up many tempting lines of inquiry. For in this volume the author, a widely-known expert in gems and a lifelong collector of everything relating to them, does not restrict himself to a history or description of them, but links their study with a consideration of the part which they have played in human history, the superstitions which have gathered about them, the belief in their magical properties entertained among different peoples, and their use in healing. He treats his subject in ten divisions: Magic Stones and Electric Gems; Meteorites or Celestial Stones; Stones of Healing; the Virtues of Fabulous Stones, Concretions and Fossils; Snake Stones and Bezoars; Angels and Ministers of Grace; The Religious Use of Various Stones; Amulets; Ancient, Medieval and Ori-

ental; Amulets of Primitive Peoples and of Modern Times; and Facts and Fancies about Precious Stones. The author brings to the consideration of each of these divisions of his subject the fruits of many years of reading and research, carried on in connection with his work for the United States Geological Survey and the United States Fish Commission, but leading him far afield in associated and fascinating investigations. A keen and whimsical humor enlivens his pages, and his work, while of permanent value for reference and appealing strongly to special students, appeals scarcely less strongly to the general reader who will find it alive with human interest and richly suggestive. Ninety or more illustrations in color, doubletone and line enhance its value and beauty.

To the selection of the material for "The Home Book of Verse for Young Folks" (Henry Holt & Co.) Mr. Burton Egbert Stevenson has brought the same catholic but discriminating taste, the same instinct for the beautiful, and the same wide range of reading which made his "Home Book of Verse" the richest anthology of the sort ever compiled. Here are five hundred pages or more of verse by poets well known and little known, poets of to-day and yesterday, poets grave and gay, all of a kind to appeal to young people and to awaken in them an appreciation of the best in poetry. The poems are grouped in twelve divisions—In the Nursery, The Duty of Children, Rhymes of Childhood, Just Nonsense, Fairyland, The Glad Evangel, The Wonderful World, Stories in Rhyme, My Country, The Happy Warrior, Life Lessons, and A Garland of Gold—and each group is preceded by a full-page decoration by Willy Pogany, who also contributes the gaily-colored cover linings. Whoever is looking for a

Christmas gift for a bright boy or girl which will give immediate pleasure and will outlast many Christmases may well be satisfied with this.

The author of "The Woman Homesteader," Elinore Pruitt Stewart, publishes another volume and this time she takes her readers to the excitement of the big game of the West in "Letters on an Elk Hunt." It is all very well done and the style is so simple, so real, so almost-slangy and entirely conversational, that the incredible number of adventures in happiness she meets along the road become very credible indeed. Mrs. Stewart has a delicious blend of humor and pathos and the book is as wonderful as "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" and filled with the same homely, heroic, optimism. Nothing daunts Mrs. Stewart's trust in God and good and the kind purposes of life. She is a cordial for rainy days. The daily occurrences, camps, the queer people met, the multitude of happy lovers just getting married, form the discursive, leisurely, and altogether-delightful narrative. (Houghton Mifflin Co.)

"Aunt Jane," by Jennette Lee is another of that desirable class of books which demonstrate how the leaven of love and commonsense can work upon egotism and selfishness and bring about delightful results. Aunt Jane is a very human and lovable creation. In charge of a privately endowed hospital she is the moving spirit of the whole establishment, disciplining the patients when they are refractory and going down with them into the "valley of the shadow" to bring them back by her gift of courage and belief. There is a double love story for the framework of the book, but the main interest is in the characterization. It is good to read about Aunt Jane, she is so interesting and unusual that it does not

seem to matter much whether or not "they married and lived happily ever after." That the book is amusing is needless to say, for heroic qualities lacking the salt of humor do not make as vivid a character as that of Aunt Jane. Charles Scribner's Sons.

In Mrs. Inez Haynes Gillmore's "The Ollivant Orphans," the orphans eat not only three times a day, but at odd intervals, lavishly, and with rejoicing as if Dickens or Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney had created them. They dine soberly but plenteously as soon as they return from the funeral of their mother, and the book leaves them after lavish "artistic eats" served at their first party given in their rejuvenated home. They are six: Ed., the correct; Mate, the luckless; Roly, the awkward and infantile; Ann, the manager; Beekie, ugly but with a memory for numbers, and Lalney, who strives to pacify all family disputes, and, being obstinate, is rewarded by the frank ingratitude of the disputants. The six are docile in accepting lessons from life, and the book leaves them happier, wiser and better than it finds them. It does not change their vocabulary, which includes the latest slang known to Boston and Brookline, employed with Manhattanese extravagance and humor. Even their attitudes as indicated by Mr. James Montgomery Flagg in the frontispiece and their gestures as described in the text are new Georgian, and their contempt for anything Victorian, is equaled only by their desire for Jacobean furniture, and arrangement. The single exception to this frame of mind is their way of celebrating Christmas which they observe in the purely Dickensian spirit, with Christmas tree and hospitality but without the gracious religious touch which Dickens never forgot. The Ollivants seem to know nothing higher than ethics and family affection.

Theirs is undoubtedly a very common Boston type and Mrs. Gillmore shows them in a very pleasant story. Henry Holt & Co.

Sir Gilbert Parker's novels are published all too seldom to please his friends, and it is two years since he gave them "The Judgment House," but now comes "The Money Master," a French Canadian story in which the Englishman, the Protestant, everybody but the French Canadian is evil; a being to be abhorred. Even the good Irish Catholics introduced deny the Money Master, Jean Jacques Barville, the desire of his heart, the little grandchild whom he has sought far and long. M'sieu Jean Jacques, philosophe, is his favorite style even in a court of justice, and he imposes it upon his world, where he conceives himself as omnipotent. Indeed, his attitude is much like that of the stately Bostonian described by Rufus Choate as walking the streets thinking whether God made him or he made God. But in prosperity his pride and his philosophy are carried airily and joyously, overlaid by that delicate veil of good taste with which a Frenchman conceals and decorates even his boasts. The other sides of the Gallic character, the ferocity which avenges a wrong and ransacks the depths of the dictionary for an abusive epithet, are illustrated in him, and the Frenchman's noble endurance, surviving years of disappointment, meeting every fresh trial with renewed courage and resources, and laying him down with a will, when he retires from the open combat, to seek well-earned repose. Jean Jacques Barville is beloved by the friends who see his little vanities and smile at them, but his latent heroism is unsuspected until misfortune seems ready to crush him. He himself is surprised by the kindness offered to him, and the story leaves him well



content. The author gives the book a second title, calling it "The curious history of Jean Jacques Barbille, his labors, his loves and his ladies" and the ladies appear in M. André Castaigne's excellent pictures. The fire of genius burns in every page. Harper & Bros.

Mrs. Mary Austin's drama "The Arrow-Maker" is published in a new and revised edition by Houghton Mifflin Co. In its present form, the concessions made to the requirements of stage presentation in the original edition of 1911 are eliminated, and the drama is given as the author first framed it.

Margaret Widdemer, author of "The Factories and Other Lyrics" (John C. Winston Co.), is a prophet rather than a poet; yet, she was born with the singer's ear. If her fury for her message makes her impatient of tinkering for the tune, it also raises her verses to a level unattained by putterers after perfection. As with Markham her production is uneven; it rises to supreme heights as in "The Factories" and falls to the prosaic in "Carnations" when she essays the merely pretty and sentimental. Still "Carnations" is a single instance. Constantly she flames. The palpitations of her creed, of her bigotry, of her inability to see but one thing—the cruelty of life towards children and girls—takes the reader's breath. It is difficult to express the exact impression left behind the theme so bitter, the music so profound. She feels for all, the mill-girl, the soldier, the street-walker, the chantress of unclean songs in a vile cafe; not one escapes, for her peering eyes seek for the good in all and touch that good with a phrase of sympathy and comprehension:

"The strangers' children laugh along  
the street:

They know not, or forget the sweeping  
of the Net

Swift to ensnare such little careless  
feet.

And we—we smile and let them pass  
along,

And those who walk beside, soft-  
smiling, cruel-eyed—

We guard our own—not ours to right  
the wrong!

We do not care—we shall not heed or  
mark,

*Till we shall hear one day, too late to  
strive or pray,*

*Our daughters' voices crying from the  
dark!"*

The strangest thing that Eugene Mason has done in his book, "Preferences in Literature," is in that essay which links Paul Verlaine and Christina G. Rossetti under the title of "Two Christian Poets." Yet, after a thoughtful reading, the writer commends himself and his hypothesis to the student, as he does in the rest of his unusual and original musings over the great literary men of the present generation. His seven essays range over men and women, French and English, taking in, along with these two, Anatole France, Kipling and de Maupassant, Heredia, Yeats, Francis Thompson and Walter Pater. Of each one he has something new to say and says it in sparkling, epigrammatic English, often with a twist of paradox as, for instance, "Legends and traditions are often more real than facts." There is a constant play of humor—"The sonnet is a very hard boiled egg at best," but one of a thousand quips. The book is entertaining as well as instructive and inspiring. The author adds an "Introduction to Wace's 'Roman de Brut'" that is erudite of ancient things. E. P. Dutton & Co.